

Letters of an Altrurian Traveller

by William Dean Howells



LITERS OF AN ALTHURIAN TRAVELLER.

By W. D. HOWLAND.

I.

New York, September 1st, 1892.
My dear Cyril—

I hoped before this to have seen you again in Althuria, and given you by word of mouth some account of my experiences and observations in this country; but I have now been here more than a year, and I find myself still lingering here in a kind of fascination. At times I seem to my self to have been in a fantastic dream since I landed on its shores, with the spectacle of so many things before me happening without law and without reason, as things do in sleep; and then, again, it is as if I were carried by some enchantment back to the old competitive period in our own country; for, after all, America is like a belated Althuria, terribly repeating in the nineteenth century the errors which we committed in the tenth. In fact, if you could imagine an Althuria where the millennium had never yet come, you would have some conception of America; and, perhaps, I had better leave you with this suggestion, and not attempt further to generalize from my impressions, but give you those at first hand and let you form your own idea of the American civilization from them.

I say civilization, because one has to use some such term to describe a state which has advanced beyond the conditions of barbarism, tribalism, slavery, serfdom and feudalism; but, of course, no Althurian would think America a civilized country, though many of the Americans are as truly civilized as ourselves. We should not think it a democratic country, though many of the Americans are really democratic, and they are all proud of their republican form of government, though it is now little but a form. Few would we think it a Christian country, though it abounds in good people, who love one another, and lead lives of continual self-sacrifice. The paradox is intelligible when you reflect that these Americans are civilized, and democratic and Christian, in spite of their conditions and not because of them. In order to do them full justice, you must remember that they are still, socially as well as civically,

stuck in the lowest depths of competition, and that, theoretically at least, they prize this principle as the spring of all the personal and public virtues. To us this is a frightful anomaly; but because they do not feel it so, they are often able to do and to will the good, as I have mentioned. Nowhere else in the whole world is capitalism more carried to such brutal excess, and yet nowhere else have qualities which we should think impossible in a capitalistic state shown themselves so nobly, so beautifully. It is this fact, in its different aspects, which, I suppose, has formed for me that fascination I have felt almost from the first moment of my arrival.

I had hardly been in the country a week before an illustration of the facility with which human nature adjusts itself to bad conditions and makes them tolerable by its patience, eclipsed all the little instances that were every moment offering themselves to my notice. The great event at Homestead, which our Althurian papers will have given you some account of, occurred little over a year ago, but it is already forgotten. To the Americans it was not noteworthy that a force of armed workmen should bloodily fight out their quarrel with the mercenaries of their masters. In many states no change of the laws in respect to the incident has taken place to prevent its repetition, on any larger or smaller scale. None of the legal procedures have resulted in anything; and so far as the events for murder on either side are concerned, the whole affair has ended like a comic opera; and the warring veterans have left the stage singing the same chorus together. The affair is, in fact, so thoroughly banal that I have to take my imagination in both hands before I can conceive of it as a fact; but the Americans are so used to these private wars between the banded hosts of labor and the henchmen of capital, that they accept it as something almost natural, or as a disease inherent in the nature of things, and having its own laws and fluctuations. The outbreak at Homestead, as you know, was followed by something like a civic convulsion among the masters in Penn-

was and in Idaho, and by a strike of railroad employees at Buffalo, which destroyed immense values, delayed traffic, and shed blood on both sides. In this last strike it was thought a great gain that the railroad managers, instead of employing secretaries to shoot down the strikers, appealed to the state for protection; and it was somehow felt to be a fine effect of plutocracy that the militia should occupy the scene of the riot in force and bear themselves toward the strikers like the invaders of an enemy's country.

If it had not all been so tragical in other aspects, the observer must have been amazed by the attitude of most Americans towards these affairs. They seemed really to regard them as proofs of the superiority of the plutocracy which they call a republic, and to feel a kind of pride in the promptness and ferocity of the civil and military officials in suppressing symptoms which ought to have appeared to every sane person as signs of the gravest organic disorder. To my mind nothing seems so conclusive against their pretensions to civilization as the fact that these terrible occurrences are accepted as the necessary incidents of civilization.

There was, indeed, a certain small percentage of the people who felt the significance of the disasters, and I am anxious to have you understand that the average of intelligence among the Americans, as well as the average of virtue, is very high, not according to the Altruian standard of course, but certainly according to the European standard. And as their plutocracy is, it is still the best system known to civilizational conditions, except perhaps that of Switzerland, where the initiative and the referendum enable the people to originate and to ultimate legislation, while the Americans can do neither. Here, the people, as you know, can only elect representatives; these again delegate their powers to committees, which in effect make the laws governing the nation. The American plutocracy is the old oligarchic conception of government in a new phase, and while it is established and maintained by a community mostly Christian, it is essentially pagan in its civic ideal. Yet this people, whose civic ideal is pagan, are, many of them, not only Christians in creed, but Christian

in life as far as their politics and their society permit them to think rightly and act generously. There are beautiful and pathetic instances of approach to our ideal among them which constantly win my admiration and compassion. That is to say, certain Americans are good and gentle not because of conditions that invite them to be so, but in spite of conditions that invite them to be otherwise, almost with the first economic and social lesions which they touch. Almost from the beginning the American is taught to look out for himself in business and in society, and if he looks out for others at the same time it is by a sacrifice of advantages which are vitally necessary to him in the battle of life. He may or he may not make these sacrifices; he very often does, to such effect that the kindest and lowliest natures I have known here have been those of unsuccessful Americans, and the ugliest and hate-fullest, those of successful Americans. But the sad thing, and the droll thing, is that they think their bad conditions the source of their virtues, and they really believe that without the inducements to rapacity on every hand there would be no beauty in yielding and giving.

Certain persons have been instances to me as embodying certain generous qualities, and when I explain that the man who had not all these qualities in Altruia would be as exceptional as the man who has them is here, I have seen that people either did not believe me or did not understand me. The Americans honor such qualities as much as we do, and they appreciate gentleness, unselfishness, and neighborliness as much as we do, but they expect them only so far as they do not cross a man's self-interest; when they do that, he is a very unusual man if he continues to indulge in them or, as they say, he is not human. When I tell them that the man who does not indulge them in Altruia is not human they look blank or suspect me of a joke. When I try to make them understand that in their sense we have no self-interest in Altruia, and that if they had our conditions they would have no self-interest, it alarms them; they have so long been accustomed to live, agree one another that they cannot imagine living for one another; they think self-interest

a very good thing, the best sort of thing, and they ask what merit has a man in being good if he is not good to his disadvantage; they expect to conceive that a man *should* have no merit in being good. As for Christ's coming to do away with the old pagan economies as well as the old pagan ethics, they look at the notion.

I will not try, in this letter, to tell you just how all this can be, you will, in some sort conceive of the possibility from what you know of the competitive world at second hand, but I hope to make it clearer to you by and by. You must always account for a sort of bewilderment in me, inevitable in the presence of a state of things which is the complete inversion of our own, and in which I seem to get the same effect of life that boys sometimes get of the landscape by putting down their heads and looking at it between their legs.

Just at present there is no violent outbreak in the economic world, no bloody collision between labor and capital, no private war to be fought out in the face of the whole acquiescent nation till the uneasiness forces the government to interfere and put down the weaker party. But though there is now an interval of quiet, no one can say how long it will last, and many feel that there is even something ominous in it, that it is something like the calm in the heart of the cyclone. The cyclone is financial, if I may carry out the figure, and it began to blow, no one knows why or whence, several months ago. A great many weather-wisemen pretended to know, and began to prophesy that if the export of gold to Europe could be stopped, and the coinage of silver could be arrested, and the enormous imports could be removed, the ship of state would have plain sailing again. But the outflow of gold ceased without the slightest effect upon the cyclone; the mere threat of touching the tariff caused the closure of factories and the downing by the score, and the dismissal of workmen by the hundred thousand; with every prospect that the coinage of silver would be arrested, there were failures of banking-houses and business houses on every hand. It remains to be seen what effect the actual demonetisation of silver will have upon the situation, but the situation is so chaotic that no one among all the

weather-wise men ventures to prophesy when the storm will cease to rage. Perhaps it has already ceased, but so far as the logic of events is concerned we might as well be in the heart of the cyclone, as I suggested.

I am afraid that with all your reading, and with all your special study of American conditions you would be dismayed if you could be confronted with the financial ruin which I find myself in the midst of, but which this extremely amiable and helpful people do not seem to think so disastrous. Like their bloody industrial wars, it is of such frequent recurrence that they have come to look upon it as in the order of nature. Probably they would tell you, if criticised from our point of view, that it was human nature to go to pieces about once in so often, and that this sort of disintegration was altogether preferable to any hard and fast system that held it together by the cohesion of moral principles. In fact these whole business world is a world of chance, where nothing happens according to law, but follows a loose order of accident, which any other order of accident may change. The question of money is the prime question of American life, and you would think that the issue of money would be one of the most carefully guarded functions of the government. But curiously enough, most of the money in the hands of the American people is not issued by the government at all, but consists of the promissory notes of a multitude of banks, as was the case with us in the old competitive days. The government bonds, which perpetuate the national debt, that their circulation may be based on them, are exempted from taxation as a sort of reward for the assumption of the governmental function by the banks; and these banks are supposed to serve the community by supplying business men with the means of carrying on the commercial warfare. But they do this only at the lowest rates of interest, and in times of general prosperity: at the first signs of adversity they withhold their loans. You might think that the government which secures their notes would also secure their deposits, but the government does nothing of the kind, and the man who trusts his money to their keeping does so wholly at his own risk. When they choose, or when they are un-

side, they may come to pay it back to him, and he has no recourse whatever.

With a financial system resting upon such a basis as this, and with the perpetual gashings in values, nominal and real, and in every kind of produce and manufacture, which goes on throughout the whole country, you can hardly be surprised at the recurrence of the panics which follow each other at irregular intervals in the American business world. Indeed, the Americans are not surprised themselves; they regard them as something that always must be because they always have been, though they own that such successive panic attacks widen disaster and cause deeper suffering. Still, they expect them to come, and they do not dream of contriving a system like ours, in which they are so much possible than human sacrifices. They say, that is all very well for us Altrurians, but it would not do for Americans, and they really seem to believe that misery on so vast a scale as they have it in one of their financial convulsions is a sort of testimony to their national greatness. When they begin to drag themselves up out of the pit of ruin, bewildered and benumbed by their fall, they begin to boast of the magnificent recuperative energies of the country. Still, I think that the old American maxim that it will all come out right in the end, has less and less acceptance. Some of them are beginning to fear that it will come out wrong in the end, if they go their old gait, or that it will at least come not Europe in the end. I would not venture to say how common this doubt was, but it certainly exists, and there is no question but that some of the thoughtfulest and best Americans are beginning to look toward Altruria as the only alternative from Europe.

Such Americans see that Europe is already upon them in the conditions of the very rich and the very poor. Poverty is here upon the European terms, and luxury is here upon the European terms. There is no longer the American workman as he once was, he still gets better wages than the European workman, but his economic and social status is exactly the same. He has accepted the situation for the present, but what he intends to do about it hereafter, no man knows; he, least of all men, knows. The

American plutocrat has accepted the situation even more frankly than the proletarian. He perceives distinctly that there is no American life for the very rich American, and when he does not go abroad to live, as he increasingly does, he lives at home upon the same terms and to the same effect that the Continental noble lives in Europe, for the English noble is wealthier to his country than the rich American. Of course the vast majority of Americans are of the middle class, and with them you can still find the old American life, the old American ideals, the old American principles; and if the old America is ever to prevail, it must be in their love and honor of it. I do not mean to say the American middle class are as a general thing consciously American, but it is valuable that they are even unconsciously so. As a general thing they are simply and frankly bent upon providing for themselves and for their own; but some of them already see that they cannot realize even this low ideal, as things are, and that it will be more and more difficult to do so hereafter. A panic like the present is a great object lesson to them, and teaches the essential weakness of their system, as nothing else could. It shows that no industry, no frugality, no sagacity can be proof against such a storm, and that when it comes, the prudent and the diligent must suffer from it like the improvident and the indolent. At least some of them are asking themselves if there is not something wrong in the system itself, and if a system based upon self-seeking does not embody recurrent disaster and final defeat. They have heard of the Altrurian system, and they are inquiring whether the sole economic safety is not in some such system. You must not suppose their motive is so low as this makes it seem. They are people of fine courage, and they have accessions of a noble generosity, but they have been born and bred in the presence of the fact that each man can abuse now himself and those dear to him, from want; and we must not blame them if they cannot first think of the beauty and the grandeur of saving others from want. For the present, we cannot expect that they will think of anything higher at first than the danger to themselves, respectively; when they grasp the notion of escape from that, they will

think of the danger to others, and will be eager to Altruistise, as they call it, for the sake of the common good as well as the personal good. I may be in error, through my zeal for Altruistic principles, but I think that the Altruistic idea has come to stay, as they say, with this class. At any rate, it is not the very rich or the very poor who are leading reform in our direction, but it is such of the comfortable middle class as have got the light. There is everything to hope from this fact, for it means that if the change comes at all, it will not come superficially and it will not come violently. The comfortable Americans are the most comfortable people in the world, and when they find themselves threatened in their comfort, they will deal with the danger seriously, deliberately, thoroughly.

But whatever the struggle is to be here, whether it will be a wild revolt of the poor against the rich, of labour against capitalist, with all the sanguinary circumstance of such an outbreak, or whether it will be the quiet opposition of the old American instincts to the recent plutocratic order of things, ending in the overthrow of the pagan ideals and institutions, and the foundation of a commonwealth upon some such basis as ours, I am sure that some sort of conflict is coming. I may be unable to do the proletarian justice, but as far, I do not think they have shown great wisdom in their attitude. If you were here you would sympathise with them, as I do in their strikes; but I think that you too would feel that there were not the means to achieve the ends they seek, and that higher wages and fewer hours were not the solution. The solution is the complete control of the industries by the people, as we know, and the assurance to every man willing to work that he shall not want; yet I must confess that the workmen in America have not often risen to the conception of this notion. It is from those who have not been forced to feel so exhaustively that they cannot think clearly, it is from the comfortable middle class, which sees itself more and more closely surrounded by the initial factors of this so-called civilisation that the good time is to come. It is by no means impossible, indeed, if things could now go on as they are going, and the plutocrats

should be more and more subjected to the plutocrats, that we should find the workmen arrayed by their enemies against the only principles that can benefit them. This is to be seen clearly in the case of those small merchants and manufacturers whose business has been destroyed by the trusts and syndicates, but who have been recruited into the service of their destroyers, the plutocracy has enough faithful alibi-ed followers. But it is not possible for all the small merchants and manufacturers to be disposed of in this way, and it is to such of these as perceive the fact, that the good cause can look for help. They have already fully imagined the situation, and some of them have imagined it actual. It is chiefly they, therefore, who are anxious to Altruistise America, as the sole means of escape from their encompassing dangers. Their activity is very great and it is incessant; and they were able to shape and characterise the formless desires of a popular movement in the West, so that at the last presidential election twenty-two electoral votes were cast in favour of the Altruistic principles which formed the vital element of the uprising.

Nevertheless, as I have more than once suggested, I do not think any fundamental change is near. The Americans are a very conservative race, and much slower to move than the English, as the more intelligent English have often observed. The Altruistisation of England may take place first, but I do not think I am mistaken in believing that America will yet be entirely Altruistised. Just at present the whole community is proletarianised, and is made to feel the poor man's concern as to where the next day's bread or the next day's cake is to come from; if a man is used to having cake he will be as anxious to keep on having cake as the man who is used to having bread alone will be anxious to keep on having bread. In former times this experience would probably have been without definite significance or ultimate effect, but now I do not think it will be so. The friends of Altruistisation will be sure to press its lessons home; and the people have been so widely awakened to the possibility of escape from the evils of their system that they will not be as patient of them as they have been in former times.

You might infer from the apparently

unbroken front that the Americans show on the side of competition in the great conflict dividing every nation into opposing camps, that there was no division amongst them. But there is very great division amongst them, and there is acceptance of one Altruistic principle or another to such a degree that there may be said to be almost a universal tendency toward Altruismization, though, as a whole, the vast majority of Americans still regard the idea of human brotherhood with distrust and dislike. No doubt they will now patch up some sort of financial *modus vivendi*, and go on as before; in fact, there is no reason why they should not, in their conception of things. There was no reason why the panic should have come, and there is no reason why it should not go; but still, I do not think it will have come and gone without something more of question than former panics.

The friends of Altruismization will not fail to bring before the American people some question of the very nature of money, and of the essential evil of it, as they understand money. They will try to show that accumulated money, as a means of providing against want, is always more or less a failure in private hands; that it does not do its office; that it creates the hardest clutch when its need is greatest. They will teach every man, from his own experience and conscience, that it is necessarily corrupting; that it is the source of most vices, and the incentive, direct or indirect, of almost every crime. They will prove that these are not the mere accidents of money, but are its essentials; and that a thing invented to make or to recognize economic inequality among men can never be otherwise than harmful to them. They will preach the Altruistic notion of money, as the measure of work done and the warrant of need to be relieved, which as a civilized state can have no use but to issue from the commonwealth to the man who has worked, and return to the commonwealth from the man who has satisfied his wants with it. As yet, most Americans believe that money can be successfully gathered into one man's hands by his cunning and his skill and as innocently taken from another although his misfortune or his weakness. This primitive notion of money,

which is known to us historically, is of actual effect among them, and though I was aware of the fact before I came to America, as you are now, I had no idea of the infernal variety of the evil.

In Altruism we cannot imagine a starving man in rags, passing the threshold of another man enriched with every luxury and warranted in his opulence by the same law that dooms the beggar to destitution. But this is a spectacle so common in this great typical American city that no one would turn to look at it. In fact, both the beggar and the millionaire recognize the situation as something almost normal. Charity, the love of man and the fear of God, as the Americans know it, does not propose to equalize the monstrous conditions, or to do more than afford alleviation at the best, until the wretch in the gutter can somehow win from the wretch in the palace the chance to earn a miserable wage. This chance is regarded not as his right, it is his privilege, and it is accorded him usually at the cost of half a dozen other wretches, who are left outcast by it. It is money that creates this evil, and yet the Americans think that money is somehow a good thing; and they think they are the most prosperous people on earth, because they have more moneyed men among them than any other people.

I know, my dear Cyril, how strange all this will seem to you, how impossible, in spite of your study of American conditions. I remember how we used to talk of America together, before I planned my present visit, and how you disputed the general Altruistic notion of this country, as necessarily mistaken, because we said that such things could not be in a republic and a democracy. We had our dreams of a system different from ours, a system which wanted itself the revolution, above all others, of the individuality which we Altruists prize more than everything else. We felt that our sympathies must have been busy or mistaken in their observations, but you have only to visit this democratic republic, to understand that they have no such thing as individuality here, and that in conditions where one man depends upon another man for the chance of earning his bread, there can be no more liberty than there is equality.

The Americans still imagine that they have liberty, but as for the equality which we supposed the aim of their democracy, nobody any longer even pretends that it is, or that it can be. With the rich there is a cynical contempt of it; with the poor a cynical despair of it. The division into classes here is made as sharply as in any country of Europe, and the lines are passed only by the gain or the loss of money. I say only, but of course there are exceptions. The career is still open to the talents, and the plebeian rich here are glad to ally themselves with the patrician poor of Europe; but what I say holds good of the vast majority of cases. Every tendency of economic and social life is a tendency to greater and greater difference between the classes, and in New York, which is the most typical of American cities, the tendency is swifter and stronger than in other places.

It is for this reason that I have come here for the winter before I leave these shores, as I hope, forever. My American sojourn has been a passionate disappointment from first to last: it has been a grief which I cannot expose to you, for the people are at least so noble, so generous, so magnanimous, so infinitely better than their conditions that my pity for them has been as great as my detestation of the terms on which they accept life. I cannot convey to you the pathos with which the spectacle of their contradictions fills me; I can only say that if I were an American with nothing but a competitive conception of life, as a warfare in which the strong must perpetually and even involuntarily oppress the weak, as a race in which the weak must seize every advantage of the slow, as a game in which the shrewd must outwit the simple, I would not accept life at all. But, of course, I speak as an Altrurian, and I warn you that an utter abhorrence of the situation would inspire a thousand things that are lovely and of good report. It would ignore the most heroic self-sacrifice, the most romantic martyrdom, the spectacle of unnumbered brave and good, who do not the less sublimely lay their heads upon the altar, because they lay them faithfully there.

It is the exceptional character of what is generous and noble in the Americans this accidental, this vicarious nature of

their heroisms and their martyrdoms, that moves me to a pity for which there seems no relief but laughter. They pray as we do that God's will may be done here, and His kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven, but they reject both because, as they say, that they are against human nature. They do this in spite of those instances of heavenly goodness among them, which they honor as much as we do, and admire even more, since these things are not so difficult with us as with them. They fancy that goodness, and gentleness, and unselfishness, would somehow lose their value if they were the rule and not the exception; that they would become cheap in becoming common. Perhaps I can best make you understand all this by an illustration drawn from the æsthetic aspect of this vast city, which, I suppose is upon the whole, the ugliest city in the world. Ugliness is the rule in the architecture, which is for the greatest part not merely ignoble and mean but positively offensive, insulting the eye by every conceivable or inconceivable stupidity and vulgarity of form. But in the midst of the chaotic ugliness there is from time to time, and from space to space, a beautiful edifice erected by some artist who has been able so far to circumvent some millionaire as to turn his money to that effect. I could instance half a score of exquisite masterpieces of this sort, but you would not be the wiser for my doing so. It is in architecture more than in any other art that the Americans have shown themselves gifted, but they have not shown it to such effect as to characterize their richest and greatest city with architectural beauty. On the contrary, so far from reforming their environment, these graceful structures are lost and annulled in it. Your pleasure in them is spoiled by the sight of some monstrosity next to them, or by the sea of hideous forms that welters round them and overwhelms them from every side. They do not stand out from the world's mass, they sink into it and leave you thinking of that, and bruised and quivering from the affront and hurt of it.

Commend me lovingly to all the Altrurians, and believe me, dear Cyril, most affectionately and constantly,

Your friend,

ALTRURIAN HOMER



LETTERS OF AN ALTRURIAN
TRAVELLER.

By W. D. HOWLAND.

II.

Chicago, Sept. 28, 1893.

My dear Cyril:

When I last wrote you, I thought to have settled quietly down in New York for the rest of my stay in America, and given my time wholly to the study of its life, which seemed to me typical of the life of the whole country. I do not know, even now, that I should wish altogether to revise this impression; it still appears to me just, if not so distinct and so decisive, as it appeared before I saw Chicago, or rather the World's Fair City at Chicago, which is what I want to write you of. Chicago, one might say, was after all only a Newer York, an attenuated Manhattan, the realized ideal of that hurgheness, bustiness and bustness, which New York has persuaded the Americans is metropolitan. But after seeing the World's Fair City here, I feel as if I had caught a glimpse of the glorious capitals which will win the bell and shores of the east and the borderless plains of the west, when the New York and the Newer York of today shall seem to all the future Americans as impossible as they would seem to any Altrurian now.

To one of our philosophy it will not be wonderful that this Altrurian miracle should have been wrought here in the very heart, and from the very heart, of agglomeration seven times heated in the fiery competition hitherto the sole joy of this strange people. We know

that life produces life only up to a certain point, and that then neither comes of life since all things are of one essence, that from life comes death at last, and from death comes life again in the final issue. Yet it would be useless trying to persuade most Americans that the World's Fair City was not the effect, the fine flower, of the competition which underlies their economy, but was the first fruits of the principle of evolution which animates our happy commonwealth, and gives room, as no where else on earth, a foretaste of heaven. If I were writing to an American I should have to supply him with proofs and argue facts at every moment, which will be self-evident to you in their mere statement.

I confess that I was very loth to leave New York, which I fancied I was beginning to see whole, after my first fragmentary glimpses of it. But I perceive now that without a sight of the White City (as the Americans with their instant poetry called the official group of edifices at the great Fair) and the knowledge of its history, which I could have realized nowhere but in its presence, New York would have wanted the relief, the perspective, in which I shall hereafter be able to study it. For the worst effect of anyone in an egotistic civilization (I always use this word for lack of a closer descriptive) is that Altrurian motives and efforts become incredible, and almost inconceivable. But the Fair City is a bit of Altruria; it is as if the capital of one of our Kingdoms had set sail and landed somehow on the shores of the vast inland sea, where the Fair City, like its domes and columns

Its story, which I need not rehearse to you at any length, records the first great triumph of Altrurian principles among this people in a work of peace: in their mighty civil war they were Altrurian enough, and more than once they have proved themselves capable of a magnificent self-sacrifice in bloodshed, but here for the first time in their pitiless economic struggle, their industrial warfare in which they neither give nor ask quarter, and take no prisoners, the interests submitted to the arts, and lost themselves as frankly to the work as if there had never been a question of money in the world. From the beginning it was believed that there could be no profit in the Fair, money

loss was expected and accepted as a necessary part of the greater gain; and when the question passed from how much to how, in the discussion of the ways and means of creating that beauty which in the augustest use, the septuagets put themselves into the hands of the artists. They did not do it at once, and they did not all do it willingly. It is a curious trait of the American who has made money that he thinks he can make anything; and the Chicago millionaires who found themselves authorized by the nation to spend their money in the creation of the greatest marvel of the competitive world, thought themselves fully competent to work the miracle, or to choose the men who would work it according to their ideas. But their clarification, if it was not as swift as the passage of light was thorough, and I do not suppose there is now any group of rich men in Europe or America who have so luminous a sense of the true relations of the arts and the interests as they. The notion of a competition among the artists, which is the practical American's notion of the way to get the best art, was at length repented by these most practical Americans, and one mind large enough to conceive the true means and strong enough to give its conception effort was empowered to invite the free-cooperation of the arts through



the foremost artists of the country. As yet the governmental functions in so weak here that the national part in the work was chiefly obstructive, and finally null; and when it came to this there remained an opportunity for the arts, solicited as to means and unhindered by conditions.

For the different buildings to be erected, different architects were chosen; and for the first time since the great ages, since the beauty of antiquity and the elegance of the renaissance, the arts were recruited. The greatest landscape gardeners, architects, sculptors and painters, gathered at Chicago for a peace interchange of ideas and criticisms; and the miracle of beauty which they have wrought grew openly in their breath and under their hands. Each did his work and had his way with it, but in this congress of gifted minds, of sensitive spirits, each probed by the centre of all, and there were certain features of the work—as for instance, the exquisite peristyle dividing the city from the lake—which were the result of unceasing impulses and suggestions from so many different artists that it would be hard to divide the honour among them with exactness. No one, however, seems to have been conscious of another's share, and each one gave his talent as freely as the millennium gave their money. These great artists willingly accepted a fifth, a tenth, of the gain which they could have commanded as a private enterprise, and lavished their time upon the opportunity afforded them, for the pleasure of it, the pride of it, the pure good of it.

Of the effect, of the visible, tangible result, what better can I say, than that in its presence I felt myself again in Altruria? The town came, and the pillared porticoes came against my vision, through the hard nasal American tones, the liquid notes of our own speech stole to my inner ear, I saw under the careworn masks of the competitive crowds, the peace, the rest of the dear Altrurians face, the gay trims of our own simple costumes eclipsed the different versions of the Paris fashions about me. I was at home once more, and my heart overflowed with patriotic rapture in this strange land, so remote from ours in everything, that at times Altruria really

seems to me the dream which the Americans think it.

I first saw the Fair City by night, from one of the electric launches which ply upon the lagoon; and under the dimmed heaven, in the splendor of the hundred moony arc-lamps of the esplanades, and the myriad incandescent bubbles that headed the white quays, and defined the structural lines of dome and porch and pediment, I found myself in the midst of the Court of Honor, which you will recognise on the general plan and the photographs I enclose. We fronted the beautiful Agricultural building, which I think fits the finest in the city, though many prefer the perfect Greek of the Art building; and on our right was the Administration building with its connected dome, and the magnificent sculptured fountain before it, turned silver in the radiance of the clustered electric jets at either side. On our right was the glorious peristyle, serene, pure, silent, lifting a population of statues against the night, and dividing the lagoon from the lake, whose soft moon came appealingly through the pillared spaces, and added a divine hush to my ecstasy. Here a group of statuary showed itself prominently on quay or cornice; we caught the flamy curve of a bridge's arch; a pale column lifted its jutting piers into the light; but nothing resisted; all was harmonised to one effect of beauty, as if in symbol of the concentrated impulses which had created it. For the moment I could not believe that so foul a thing as money could have been even the means of its creation. I call the effect creation because it is divinely beautiful, but no doubt suggestion would be a better word, since they have here merely sketched in stone what we have executed in marble in each of our Regency capitals.

In grandeur of design and freedom of expression, it is perhaps even nobler than the public edifices of some of these, as I had to acknowledge at another moment, when we rounded the shores of the Wooded Island which forms the heart of the lagoon, and the launch slowed while we got the effect of its black foliage against the vast lateral expanse of the Liberal Arts building. Then, indeed, I was reminded of our national capital, when it shows its mighty mass above

the books around it, on some anniversary night of our Revolution.

But the situation of Altruria was very vivid at many moments in the Fair City, where I have spent the happiest days of my stay in America, perhaps because the place is so little American in the accepted sense. It is like our own cities in being a design, the effect of a principle, and not the straggling and shapeless accretion of accident. You will see, from the charts and views I send you, something of the design in detail, but you can form only a dim conception of the skill with which the natural advantages of the site have been turned to account, and even its disadvantages have been transmuted to the beauty which is the highest and last result of all. There was not only the great lake here, which contributes so greatly to the beauty, but there were marshes to be drained and dredged before its pure waters could be avoided in. The trees which at different points offer the contrast of their foliage to the white of the edifices, remain some withering growths which overgrew the swamps and sand dunes, and which had to be destroyed in great part before these lovely gardens could be evoked from them. The earth itself, which now of all the earth seems the spot best adapted to the site of such a city, had literally to be formed anew for the use it has been put to. There is now no shadow, no hint of the gigantic difficulties of the undertaking, which was carried on in the true Altrurian spirit, so far as the capitalists and artists were concerned, and with a joy like ours in seeing nature yield herself to the enlightened will of man. If I told you how time itself was overcome in this work by the swiftness of modern methods, it would be nothing new to you, for we are used to seeing the powerful machinery of our engineers change the face of the land.

sculpture, without stay for the slow processes of other days, when the art and the saw wrought for years in the destruction of the forests that now vanish in a night. But to the Americans these things are still novel, and they boast of the speed with which the trees were dragged from the soil where they were rooted and the spurs were raised, and the wastes of steel made to smile with the verdure that now forms the most enchanting feature of their normal city.

They dwell upon this, and they do not seem to feel as I do the exquisite simplicity with which its life is operated, the perfection with which it is polished, and the thoroughness with which it has been dedicated to health as well as beauty. In



fact, I fancy that very few out of the millions who visit this gala town realize that it has its own system of drainage, lighting and transportation, and its own government, which looks as scrupulously to the general comfort and cleanliness, as if these were the private concern of each member of the government. This is, as it is with us, military in form, and the same precision and discipline which give us the ease and freedom of our civic life, proceed here from the same spirit and the same means. The *Columbian Guards*, as they are called, who are here at every turn, to keep order and to care for the pleasure as well as the welfare of the people, have been trained by officers of the United States army, who still command them, and they are amenable to the rules governing the only body in America whose ideal is not interest but duty. Every night, the whole place is cleared of the rubbish which the visitors leave behind them, as thoroughly as if it were a camp. It is merely the litter of lunch-booms and waste paper which has to be looked after, for there is little of the filth resulting in all other American cities from the use of the horse, which is still employed in them so many centuries after it has been banished from ours. The United States quincies and the watering carts are indeed unmercifully drawn through the Fair City thoroughfares by horses, but wheeled chairs pushed about by a corps of high school boys and college undergraduates keep the means of transportation by land for those who do not choose to walk. On the water the electric launches are quite of our own pattern, and steam is allowed only on the boats which carry people out into the lake for a view of the portico. But you can get this by walking, and as in Venice, which is represented here by a fleet of gondolas, there are bridges that enable you to reach every desirable point on the lagoon.

When I have spoken of all this to my American friends they have not perceived the moral value of it, and when I have insisted upon the practical perfection of the scheme apparent in the whole, they have admitted it, but answered me that it would never do for a business city, where there was something going on besides the pleasure of the eyes and the edification of the mind. When I tell them that this is

all that our Altrurian cities are for, they do not understand me, they ask where the money is made that the people live on in such play-cities; and we are often driven to despair when I try to explain that we have no money, and should think it futile and impious to have any.

I do not believe they quite appreciate the intelligence with which the Fair City proper has been separated, with a view to its value as an object lesson, from all the state and national buildings in the ground. Some of the national buildings, notably those of Germany and Sweden, are very picturesque, but the rest decline through various grades of inferiority, down to the level of the State buildings. Of these, only the California and the New York buildings have a beauty comparable to that of the Fair City: the California house, as a reminiscence of the Spanish ecclesiastical architecture in which her early history is recorded, and the New York house, as a sumptuous expression of the art which ministers to the luxury of the richest and greatest State of the Union.

By still another remove the competitive life of the present epoch is relegated to the long avenue running from the White City, which you will find marked as the Midway Plaisance. Even this, where a hundred shows rival one another in a furious advertisement for the lover of the passer, there is so much of a high interest that I am somewhat loth to instance it as actuated by an inferior principle; and I do so only for the sake of the contrast. In the Fair City, everything is free, in the Plaisance every thing must be paid for. You strike at once the hard level of the outside western world, and the Orient, which has mainly peopled the Plaisance, with its theaters and restaurants and shops, takes the tint of the ordinary American enterprise, and puts on somewhat the manners of the ordinary American knacker. It is not really so bad as that, but it is worse than American in some of the appeals it makes to the American palate, which is decent if it is dull, and respectable if it is suspicious. The licentious dances of the East are here, in the Persian and Turkish and Egyptian theaters, as well as the exquisite archaic drama of the Japanese and the Chinese in their village and temple. One could spend many days in the Plaisance, always entertainingly,

whether profitably or unprofitably, but whether one visited the Samson or Dehomayan in his hut, the Jedosin and the Lap in their camps, the delicate Japanese in his bamboo cottage, or the American Indian in his tepee, one must be aware that the citizens of the Plaisance are not there for their health, as the Americans quaintly say, but for the money there is in it. Some of the reproductions of historical and foreign scenes are excellent, like the irregular square of Old Vienna, with its quaintly built and quaintly decorated shops; the German village, with its admirably realized castle and chateau; and the Chinese street, with its motley oriental life; but these are all there for the profit to be had from the pleasure of their visitors, who seem to pay as freely as they talk through their noses. The great Ferris wheel itself, with its circle revolving by night and by day in an orbit incomparably vast, is in the last analysis a money-making contrivance.

I have tried to make my American friends see the difference, as I do, between the motive that created the Fair City, and the motive that created the Plaisance, but both seem to



their conditions are now purely monopolistic, and not perceiving that the White City is the work of an earnest betwixt the commercial interests ruling them. I expressed this belief to one of them, the banker, whom I met last summer in the country, and whom I ran upon one night during the first week of my visit here, and he said there could certainly be that sort of it. But, like the rest, he asked where the money would have come from without the warfare of competitive conditions, and he said he could not make out how we got the money for our public works in Altruria or, in fact, how we paid the paper. When I answered that as each one of us was secured by all against want, every one could freely give his labor, without money, and without price, and the paper could pay for the pure pleasure of playing, he looked stupefied and said inwardly, "Oh, come, now!"

"Why, how strange you Americans are," I could not help breaking out upon him, "with your talk about competition! There is no competition among you a moment longer than you can help, a moment after one proves himself stronger than another. Then you have monopoly, which even upon the limited scale it exists here is the only vital and fruitful principle, as you all see. And yet you are afraid to have it upon the largest possible scale.



them alike the outcome of the principle which they still believe animates their whole life. They think both an effect of the competitive conditions in which they glory, not knowing that





the national soul; the soul communistic with the whole body politic, which implicates care for every citizen as the life of the collectivity. When you have monopoly of such proportions money will cease to have any office among you, and such a beautiful creation as this will have effect from a consensus of the common wills and wishes."

He listened patiently, and he answered meekly. "Yes, that is what you Althurians believe, I suppose, and certainly what you preach; and if you look at it in that light, why there certainly is no competition left, except between the monopolies. But you must allow, my dear Henson," he went on, "that at least one of the twin fetters of our barbarous worship has had something to do with the creation of all this beauty. I'll own that you have rather knocked the notion of competition on the head; the money that made this thing possible never came from competition at all, it came from some sort or shape of monopoly, as all money always does; but what do you say about individuality? You can't say that individuality has had nothing to do with it. In fact, you can't deny that it has had everything to do with it, from the individuality of the several capitalists, up or down, to the individuality of the several artists. And will you pretend in

the face of all this wonderful work that individuality is a bad thing?"

"Have I misrepresented myself and country so badly?" I returned,—"as to have led you to suppose that the Althurians thought individuality a bad thing? It seems to me the most precious gift of the Deity, the dearest and holiest possession of his creatures. What I lament in America at every moment, what I lament even here, in the presence of a work so largely Althurian in conception and execution as this, is the wholesale effacement, the heart-breaking obliteration of individuality. I know very well that you can give me the name of the most merciful millionaire—large-thoughted and noble-willed men—whose largeness made this splendor possible, and the name of every artist they freed to such a glorious opportunity. Their individuality is history, safe in your memories; but what of the artisans of every kind and degree, whose patience and skill reached their ideals? Where will you find their names?"

My companion bowed respectfully, but not very seriously, and in his reply he took refuge in that humor peculiar to the Americans: a sort of ether where they may draw breath for a moment free from the stifling despair which must fill every true man among them when he thinks how far short of their ideal their reality has fallen.



For they were once a people with the noblest ideal; we were not modest about that; they did, indeed, intend the greatest good to the greatest number, and not merely the largest purse to the largest head. They are a proud people, and it is hard for them to confess that they have wandered from the right way, and fallen into a listless bog, where they can only bemoan themselves more and more till its streams choke them or its bad waters close over them.

"My dear fellow," the banker laughed, "you are very easily answered. You will find their names on the pay-rolls, where, I've no doubt, they preferred to have them. Why, there was an army of them; and we don't erect monuments to private soldiers, except in the lump. How would you have managed it in Altruia?"

"In Altruia," I replied, "every man who drove a nail, or stretched a line, or laid a trowel upon such a work, would have had his name somehow inscribed upon it, where he could find it, and pass it out to those dear to him and proud of him. Individuality! I find no record of it here, unless it is the individuality of the few. That of the many makes no sign from the shivern in which it is lost, either in these public works of artistic co-operation, or the exhibits of your monopolistic competition. I have wandered through

these vast edifices and looked for the names of the men who wrought the marvels of ingenuity that fill them. But I have not often found the name even of a man who owns them. I have found the styles of the firms, the companies, the tenters which turn them out as impersonally as if no heart had ever acted or gloved in imagining and embodying them. This whole mighty industrial display is it so far debauched, and yet you talk of individuality as one of your amazing principles?"

"You are hopelessly unbusinesslike, my dear Roman," said the banker, "but I like your unpracticality. There is something charming in it; there is, really, and I enjoy it particularly at this moment because it has enabled me to get back my superiority to Chicago. I am a Bostonian, you know, and I came out here with all the advantages which a Bostonian begins to acquire as soon as he gets west of the Rock Bay Fens. It is a survival of Puritanism in us. In the old times, you know, every Bostonian, no matter how he proved and professed, felt it in his bones that he was one of the elect, and we each feel so still; only then God elected us, and now we elect ourselves. Fancy such a man confronted with such an achievement as this, and unfriended yet by an Altruian traveller!

Why, I have gone about the last three days inwardly bowed down before Chicago as the most marvellous *façade*. I've said to myself that our eastern fellows did half the thing, perhaps the best half, but then I had to own it was Chicago that imagined letting them do it, that imagined the thing as a whole, and I had to give Chicago the glory. When I looked at it I had to forgive Chicago-Chicago, but now that you've set me right about the matter, and I see that the whole thing is delusional, I shall feel quite easy, and I shall not give Chicago any more credit than is due."

I saw that he was joking, but I did not see how far, and I thought it best not to take him in joke at all. "Ah, I don't think you can give her too much credit, even if you take her at the worst. It seems to me, from what I have seen of your country—and, of course, I speak from a foreigner's knowledge only—that no other American city could have brought this to pass."

"You must come and stay with us a while in Boston," said the banker; and he smiled. "One other city could have done it. Boston has the public spirit and Boston has the money, but perhaps Boston has not the audacity. Perhaps we give ourselves in Boston too much to a sense of the accomplished fact. If that is a fault, it is the only fault conceivable of us. Here in Chicago they have the public spirit, and they have the money, and they are still anxious to do; they are not content as we are, simply to be. Of course, they have not so much reason! I don't know," he added thoughtfully, "but it comes in the end to what you were saying, and no other American city but Chicago could have brought this to pass. Leaving everything else out of the question, I doubt if any other community could have denied the thing in its vastness; and the vastness seems an essential condition of the beauty. You couldn't possibly say it was pretty, for instance, if you admitted it was fine you would have to say it was beautiful. To be sure, if it were possible to have too much of a good thing, there are certain states of one's legs, here, when one could say there was too much of it; but that is not possible. But come, now; be honest for once, my dear fellow, and confess that you really prefer the

Midway Plaisance to the Fair City!"

I looked at him with silent reproach, and he broke out laughing, and took me by the arm.

"At any rate," he said, "let us go down there, and get something to eat."

*'The glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome!'*

here, take it out of you so that I find myself wanting lunch about every three hours. It's nearly as long as that now, since I dined, and I feel an irresistible yearning for Old Vienna, where that pushcock halfbrother of a waitman is just now crying the hour of time."

"Oh, is it so late as that?" I began, for I like to keep our Altrurian hours even here, when I can, and I was going to say that I could not go with him when he contrasted:

"They won't turn us out, if that's what you mean. Theoretically, they do turn people out toward the small hours, but practically, one can stay here all night, I believe. That's a charming thing about the Fair, and I suppose it's rather Chicagoan; if we'd had the Fair in Boston, every soul would have had to leave before midnight. We couldn't have helped turning them out, from the mere old-fashionedness of our Puritanic tradition, and not because we really minded their staying. In New York they would have put them out from Kettie's impertinence, and locked them up in the station-house when they got them out, especially if they were *noter* and *inoffensive*."

I could not follow him in this very well, or in the playful allusiveness of his talk generally, though I have reported it, to give some notion of his manner; and so I said, by way of bringing him within easy range of my intelligence again, "I have seen no one here who showed signs of drink."

"No," he returned. "What a serious, and peevish, and gruff crowd it is! I haven't witnessed a rudeness, or even an unkindness, since I've been here, and nobody looks as if anything stronger than apollinaris had passed his lips for a fortnight. They seem, the vast majority of them, to pass their time in the Fair City, and I wish I could flatter myself that they preferred it, as you wish me to think you do, to the Plaisance. Perhaps

they are really more interested in the mechanical arts, and even the fine arts, than they are in the muscle dances, but I'm afraid it's partly because there isn't an additional charge for admission to those improving exhibits in the official buildings. Though I dare say that most of the hardheaded folks here are really concerned in transportation and agricultural implements to a degree that it is difficult for their more cultivated fellow-countrymen to conceive of. Then, the merely instructive and historical features must have an incredible lot to say to them. We people who have had advantages, as we call them, can't begin to understand the state that most of us come here in, the state of enlightened ignorance, as one may call it, when we know how little we know, and are anxious to know more. But I congratulate you, Homer, on the opportunity you have to learn America personally, here; you won't easily have such another chance. I'm glad for your sake, too, that it (the crowd) is mainly a western and south-western crowd, a Mississippi Valley crowd. You can tell it by their accent. It's a mistake to suppose that New England has a monopoly of the habit of speaking through the nose. We may have invented it, but we have imparted it apparently to the whole west, as the Scotch-Irish of Pennsylvania have lent the twist of their "r," and the combined result is something frightful. But it's the only frightful thing about the westerners, as I find them here. Their fashions are not the latest, but they are

not only well behaved, they are on the average pretty well dressed, as the clothing store and the paper patterns dress our people. And they look pathetically good! When I think how hard-worked they all are, and what lonely lives most of them live on their solitary farms, I wonder they don't desert upon me with the whoop of savages. You're very fond of equality, my dear Homer! How do you like the equality of the American effect here? It's a vast level, as unbroken as the plains that seemed to widen as I came over them in the cars to Chicago, and that go wandering on, I suppose, to the sunset itself. I won't speak of the people, but I *can* say the plains were dreary."

"Yes," I answered, for those plains had made me melancholy, too. They looked so habitable, and they were so solitary, though I could see that they were broken by the lines of cultivated fields, which were being plowed for wheat, or were left standing with their interminable ranks of maize. From time to time one caught sight of a forlorn farmstead, with a windmill beside it, making helpless play with its vanes as if it were vainly struggling to take flight from the monotonous landscape. There was nothing of the cheerfulness of our Altrurian town villages; and I could understand how a dull uniformity of the human type might result from such an environment, as the harbor infatuated.

I have made some attempts, here, to get upon speaking terms with these average people, but I have not found them



convenient. Very likely they distrusted my advances, from the warnings given them to beware of impostors and thieves at the Fair; it is one of the necessities of daily life in a competitive civilisation, that you must be on your guard against strangers lest they cheat or rob you. It is hard for me to understand this, coming from a land where there is no theft and can be none, because there is no private property, and I have often bruised myself to no purpose in attempting the acquaintance of my fellow-visitors of the Fair. They never make any attempt at mine; no one has asked me a favor, here, or even a question; but each remains bent, in an intense preoccupation, upon seeing the most he can in the shortest time for the least money. Of course, there are many of the more cultivated visitors, who are more responsive, and who show themselves at least interested in me as a fellow-stranger; but these, though they are positively many, are, after all, relatively few. The vast bulk, the massed numbers of that immense equality which inspired my friend, the banker, by its mere aspect, were shy of me, and I do not feel that I came to know any of them personally. They strolled singly, or in pairs, or by family groups, up and down the streets of the Fair City, or the noisy thoroughfare of the *Plaisance*, or through the different buildings, quiescent, patient, unobtrusive, but reserved and unapproachable, as far as I was concerned. If they wished to know anything they asked the guards, who never failed in their duty of answering them fully and pleasantly.

The people from the different states visited their several State buildings, and seemed to be at home, there, with that instinctive sense of ownership which every one feels in a public edifice, and which is never tainted with the greedy wish to keep others out. They sat in long rows on the

benches that lined the avenues, munching the victuals they had mostly brought with them in the lunch-baskets which strewed the place at nightfall, and were gathered up by thousands in the parking of the grounds. If they were very luxurious, they went to the tables of those eating-houses where, if they ordered a cup of tea or coffee, they could spread out the repast from their boxes and enjoy it more at their ease. But in none of these places did I see any idleness or sloth, and whether they thought it necessary or not to show any civility, they showed none. They were peacefully content within the limits of their equality, and where it ended, as from time to time it must, they betrayed no discontent. That is what always astonishes me in America. The man of the higher lot accepts it uncomplainingly and with no apparent sense of injustice in the smaller lot of another. He suffers himself, without a word, to be worse housed, worse clad, worse fed, than his merely luckier brother, who could give him no reason for his better fortune than an Altruism would hold valid. Here, at the Fair, for example, on the days when the German village is open to the crowd without charge, the crowd streams through without an envious glance at the people dining richly and expensively at the restaurants, with no greater right than the others have to feed poorly and cheaply from their paper boxes. In the *Plaisance*, weary old farmwives and delicate women of the artisan class make way uncomplainingly for the ladies and gentlemen who can afford to hire wheeled chairs. As modestly and quietly they bask by the shores of the lagoon and watch those who can pay to float upon their waters in the gondolas and electric launches. Everywhere the economic inequality is as positively accepted as if it were a





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were told that he
peer of any and ev-
ery other Ameri-
can, he would re-
sist it as the grossest insult,
such is the power of the mod-
erate political situation in which
the nation has been bred.

The banker and I sat long over our sup-
per, in the grassed court of Old Vienna,
talking of these things, and enjoying a bot-
tle of delicate Rhemish wine under the mild
September moon, not quite put out of
countenance by the electric lamps. The
gay parties about us broke up one after
another, till we were left almost alone, and
the waitress in his medieval dress, with
a halberd in one hand, and a lantern in the
other, came round to call the hour for the
last time. Then my friend beckoned to
the waiter for the account, and while the
man stood figuring it up, the banker said
to me: "Well, you must come to Boston a
hundred years hence, to the next Colum-
bian Fair, and we will show you every-
body trampled about and fed at the pub-
lic expense. I suppose that's what you
would like to see?"

"It is what we always see in Althuria,"
I answered. "I haven't the least doubt
it will be so with you in much less than
a hundred years."

The banker was looking at the account
the waiter handed him. He broke into an
abrupt laugh, and then said to me, "I beg
your pardon? You were saying?"

"Oh, nothing," I answered, and then,
as he took out his pocket-book to pay, he
laid the bill on the table, and I could not
help seeing what our little supper had
cost him. It was twelve dollars, and I
was breathless, it seemed to me that two
would have been richly enough.

"They give you a good meal here,
don't you think?" he said. "But the
worst of having dined or supped well is
reflecting that if you hadn't you could
have given ten or twelve fellows who

natural inequality, like difference
in height or strength, or as if it
were something of
unseasonal privi-
lege, like birth and
the feudal counties
rape. Yet, these two
Americans
was not the



will have to go to bed supperless, a hand-
some service, that you could have bought
twenty-five hungry men a full meal each;
that you could have supplied forty-eight
with plenty; that you could have relieved
the famine of a hundred and twenty-four,
but what is the use? If you think of
these things you have no peace of your
life."

I could not help answering, "We don't
have to think of them in Althuria."

"Ah, I dare say," answered the bank-
er, as he tossed the waiter
a dollar, and we rose and
strode out into the Plein-
ance. "If all men were un-
selfish, I
should agree
with you
that Althuri-
anism was
best."



"You can't
have unself-
ishness till
you have Al-
thurianism," I re-
turned. "You can't
put the cart before the
horse."

"Oh, yes, we can," he
returned in his tone of
banter. "We always put
the cart before the horse in
America, so that the horse
can see where the cart is
going."

We strode up and down
the Pleinence, where the
crowd had thinned to a few
stragglers like ourselves.
Most of the show villages
were silenced for the night.
The cack of the Japanese wa-
ter wheel was hushed; even
the halloo of the Chinese
theater had ceased. The Sa-
moans slept in their stucco
huts, the Redskins were



folded to slumber in their black tents. The great Ferris wheel hung motionless with its lamps like a planetary circle of fire in the sky. It was a moment that invited to musing, that made a tacit companionship precious. By an impulse to which my own feeling instantly responded, my friend passed his arm through mine.

"Don't let us go home at all! Let us go over and sleep in the peristyle. I have never slept in a peristyle, and I have a fancy for trying it. Now, don't tell me you always sleep in peristyles in *Albukia*!"

I answered that we did not habitually, at least, and he professed that this was some comfort to him; and then he went on to talk more seriously about the Fair, and the effect that it must have upon American civilisation. He said that he hoped for an æsthetic effect from it, rather than any fresh impulse in material enterprise, which he thought the country did not need. It had inventions enough, millions enough, prosperity enough; the great mass of the people lived as well and travelled as swiftly as they could desire. Now what they needed was some standard of taste, and this was what the Fair City would give them. He thought that it would at once have a great influence upon architecture, and order and refine the artists who were to house the people; and that one might expect to see everywhere a return to the simplicity and beauty of the classic forms, after so much mere wandering and maddening in design, without authority or authenticity.

I heartily agreed with him in condemning the most that had yet been done in architecture in America, but I tried to make him observe that the simplicity of Greek architecture came out of the simplicity of Greek life, and the preference given in the Greek state to the intellectual over the industrial, to art over business. I pointed out that until there was some enlightened municipal or national control of the matter, no confidence or example could avail, but that the education of the Fair City would become, among a wild and undisciplined people, a bid with the rich and a lily with the poor, and not a real taste with either class. I explained how with us the state absolutely forbade any man to approve or insult the rest by the exhibition of badness in the exterior of his

dwelling, and how finally architecture had become a government function, and its dwellings were provided for all by artists who approved themselves to the public criticism. I ventured so far as to say that the whole competitive world, with the exception of a few artists, had indeed lost the sense of beauty, and I even added that the Americans as a people seemed never to have had it at all.

He was not offended, as I had feared he might be, but asked me with perfect good nature what I meant.

"Why, I mean that the Americans came into the world too late to have inherited that influence from the antique world which was lost even in Europe, when in medieval times the picturesque barbarously substituted itself for the beautiful, and a feeling for the quaint grew up in place of love for the perfect."

"I don't understand, quite," he said, but I'm interested. Go on!"

"Why," I went on, "I have heard people rave over the beauty of the Fair City, and then go and rave over the beauty of the German village, or of Old Vienna, or the Florence. They were cultured people, too; but they did not seem to know that the reproduction of a feudal castle or of a street in the taste of the middle ages, could not be beautiful, and could at the best be only picturesque. Old Vienna is no more beautiful than the Japanese village, and the German village outshines the Japanese village only in its greater adaptability to the purposes of the painter. There is in your modern competitive world very little beauty anywhere, but there is an abundance of picturesqueness, of forms that may be reflected upon canvas, and impart the charm of their wild irregularity to all who look at the picture, though many who enjoy it there would fail of it in a study of the original. I will go so far as to say that there are points in New York, intrinsically so hideous that it makes me shudder to recall them—"

"Don't recall them!" he pleaded.

"Which would be much more capable of pictorial treatment than the Fair City, here," I continued. We had in fact got back to the Court of Honor, in the course of our talk, which I have only sketched here in the meagrest abstract. The incandescent lamps had been



A VIEW OF THE ALTHURIAN HARBOR.

quenched, and the sea-lights below and the moon above flooded the place with one silver, and the absence of the crowds that had earlier thronged it, left it to a solitude indescribably solemn and sweet. In that light, it was like a ghost of the antique world witnessing a loneliness lost to modern times everywhere but in our own happy country.

I felt that silence would have been a fitter tribute to it than any words of mine, but my companion proscribed me with an anger, "Well!" and I went on.

"This beauty that we see here is not at all picturesque. If a painter were to attempt to treat it picturesquely, he must abandon it in despair, because the charm of the picturesque is in irregularity, and the charm of the beautiful is in symmetry, in just proportion, in equality. You Americans do not see that the work of man, who is the crown of animate life, can only be beautiful as it approaches the regularity expressive of beauty in that life. Any homely thing that wants perfect balance of form or feature is in so far ugly; it is offensive and ridiculous, just as a perfectly balanced tree or ball would be. Nature is picturesque, but what man creates should be beautiful, or else it is

inferior. Since the Greeks, no people have divided this but the Althurians, until now, and I do not believe that you would have begun to grieve at it as you certainly have here, but for the spread of our ideas among you, and I do not believe that example will have any lasting effect with you unless you become Althurianized. The highest quality of beauty is a spiritual quality."

"I don't know precisely how far I have followed you," said my companion, who seemed struck by a novelty in truths which are so true with us, "but I certainly feel that there is something in what you say. You are probably right in your notion that the highest quality of beauty is a spiritual quality, and I should like very much to know what you think that spiritual quality is here."

"The quality of self-sacrifice in the capitalists who gave their money, and in the artists who gave their talent without hope of material return, but only for the pleasure of authorizing and creating beauty that shall last forever in the memory of those it has delighted."

The banker smiled compassionately.

"Ah, my dear fellow, you must realize that this was only a sport. It could be

done once, but it couldn't be kept up."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because people have got to live, even capitalists and artists have got to live, and they couldn't live by giving away wealth and giving away work, in our conditions."

"But you will change the conditions?"

"I doubt it," said the banker with another laugh. One of the Columbian guards passed near us, and uttered a titanic howl. "Do you want us to go out?" asked my friend.

"No," the young fellow hesitated. "Oh no!" and he continued his round.

"He hadn't the heart to turn us out," said the banker, "he would hate us to be turned out himself. I wonder what will become of all the poor fellows who are concerned in the government of the Fair City when they have to return to earth! It will be rough on them." He lifted his head, and cast one long look upon the crowd about us. "Good heavens!" he broke out, "and when they shut up shop,

here, will all this beauty have to be destroyed, this fabric of a vision demolished? It would be infamous, it would be sacrilegious! I have heard some talk of their burning it, as the easiest way, the only way of getting rid of it. But it *can't* be, it *can't* be."

"No, it *can't* be," I responded fervently. "It may be kept from sight in the flames like the prophet in his chariot of fire, but it will remain still in the hearts of your great people. An immortal principle, higher than one, higher even than beauty, is expressed in it, and the time will come when they will look back upon it, and recognize in it the first embodiment of the Altruistic idea among them, and will cherish it forever in their history, as the earliest achievement of a real civic life."

I believe this, my dear Cyril, and I leave it with you as my final word concerning the great Columbian Fair.

Yours in all brotherly affection,

A. HOMER.



ONE FATHERLAND.

FOR THE WORLD'S BELIGIOUS PARLIAMENT.

By CHARLOTTE FARR BROWN.

Place of all nations waving to and fro,
 Leave God's blue cross-flag floating far above;
 From One, we all have come, to One we go,
 Whose banner over all of us, is Love."

THE COSMOPOLITAN.

From every man according to his ability; to everyone according to his needs.

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LETTERS OF AN ALTHURIAN TRAVELLER.

BY W. D. HOWARD.

A SET OF ALTHURIA IN NEW YORK.

III.

New York, October 24, 1895.

WELL, my dear Cyril, I have returned to this Babylon, you are, from my fortnight's stay in that vision of Althuria at the great Fair in Chicago. I can, perhaps, give you some notion of the effect with me by saying that it is as if I were newly started and were exposing myself a second time to the shock of American conditions, stripped of the false hopes and romantic expectations which,

in some sort, softened the impression at first. I know what I had to look forward to when my eyes took the last glimpse of the Fair City, and I confess that I had not much heart for it. If it had only been to arrive here, and at once take ship for home, I could have borne it; but I had denied myself this, in the interest of the studies of platonic civilization, which I wish to make, and this purpose could not support me under the burden that weighed my spirits down. I had seen what might be, in the Fair City, and now I was to see



again what the Americans say must be, in New York, and I shrank not only from the moral, but the physical ugliness of the thing.

But, in fact, do not the two kinds of ugliness go together? I asked myself the question as I looked about me in the ridiculous sleeping car I had taken passage in from Chicago. Money had been lavished upon its appointments, as if it had been designed for the state progress of some barbarous prince through his domains, instead of the convenience of simple republican citizens from one place to another, on business. It was as expensively upholstered as the bad taste of its designer could contrive, and a rich carpet under foot caught and kept whatever disagreeables were thrown off by the slumbering occupants in their long journey; on the floor, at every seat, a silver-plated spittoon ministered to the filthy national habit. The interior was of costly foreign wood, which was everywhere covered with a foolish and meaningless carving; mirrors framed into the panels reflected the squalor blankly steadily through the whole length of the saloon. Of course, this waste in the equipment and decoration of the car meant the exclusion of the poorer sort of travellers, who were obliged to sit up all night in the day-cars, when

they might have been lodged, for a fifth of what I paid, in a sleeping-car much more tasteful, wholesome and secure than mine, which was destined sooner or later, in the furious rush of American travel, to be whirled over the side of an embankment, or plunged through a broken bridge, or telescoped in a collision, or piled in a heap of shattered and ruined splendours like its own, and consumed in a bonfire to the American god Hestia.

For not only are the comforts of travel here made so costly that none but the very well-to-do can afford them, but the service of the insufficiently manned trains and lines is overworked and underpaid. Even the poor negroes who make up the beds in the sleepers are scrupled of half a living by the companies which declare handsome dividends, and leave them to the charity of the floor and imperilled passengers. The Americans are peculiarly proud of their sleeping-car system, though I can hardly believe that when he is pinned into a broken seat, the most infatuated American can get much pleasure, while the horses advance warily upon him, out of the curving of the roadwork, or even the heavy capitals of the iron columns supporting nothing at either end of the car-roof. But until he is placed in some such predicament, the American

hours with acquiescence, if not even pleasure, of the railroad slaughter which have brought the mortality of travel to and from the Far during the past month up to a frightful sum. Naturally, if he does not read the reports of these disasters, where his own name may any day appear in the list of killed or wounded, he is not vividly concerned in the fate of the thirty thousand trainmen who are annually mangled or massacred. His regards these dire statistics, apparently, as another proof of the immense activity of his country, and he does not stop, as he is harked passionately over its continental spaces, and shut out of his train at his journey's end, from two to six hours late to consider whether a public management of public affairs is not as well in economics as in politics.

I was fortunate in my journey to New York; I arrived only two hours behind time, and I arrived safe and sound. The Americans are quite satisfied with the large average of people who arrive safe and sound, in spite of the large numbers who do neither; and from time to time their newspapers print evasive articles to show how many get home in the full enjoyment of life and limb. I do not see that they celebrate so often the seasonable arrival of the surviving travellers, and in fact, my experience of railroads in Amer-

ica is that the trainmen seldom bring me to my journey's end at the appointed hour. On each great through-road there is one very rapid train which has precedence of all other travel and traffic, and which does arrive in the hour fixed; but the other trains swift or slow, seem to come lagging in at all sorts

of intervals after their schedule-time. If I instance my experience and observation of this fact, my friends are inclined to doubt it, and if I insist upon matching it with their own, they allege the irregularity of the government trains in Germany, without seeming to know more about them than they know of their own trains. They at once begin to talk, largely of the celebrity and frequency of these, and to express their wonder that the companies should waste so much keeping their word to the public as they sometimes do.

However I was thankful for my safety and my soundness, when I found myself again in New York, though I felt as loth to believe. If I could fitly have done so I would very willingly have turned and



A glimpse of the city of New York.

taken the next train back to Chicago, since I must not take the next steamer on to Altruisa. But if I had gone back, it could only have been here fortnight more, since at the end of the month rose so far spent, they must begin to destroy the beauty they have created in the Four City House. I tried to console myself with this fact, but the sense of an irreparable loss, of harassment, of bewilderment, remained with me for days, and is only now beginning to wear itself away into a kind of impersonal sorrow, and to blend with the bronze of my encounter with the brute ugliness of this place, which is none the less braver because it is so often kindly. It is like the ugliness of some great unwieldy monster, which looks so helpless and so appealing, that you cannot quite abhor it, but experiences a sort of compassion for its awkwardness. I had thought of it in that way at a distance, but when I came to see it again, I found that, even in this aspect it was hard to bear. So I came up from the station to this hotel where I am now lodged and where my window overlooks the long reaches of the beautiful Central Park at such a height that unless I drop my glance, none of the shapeless bulk of the city

intrude themselves between me and the effect of a vast forest. My hotel is itself one of the most preposterous of the structures which disfigure the city: if a city without a sky-line can be said to be disfigured by any particular structure. With several others as vast or as high, it forms a sort of gateway to the Park, from whose leafy depths, these edifices swagging upward unnumbered stories, look like detached cliffs or some broken and jagged mountain ranges. They are built with savage disregard to one another, or to the other buildings about them, and with no purpose, apparently, but to get the most money out of the narrowest space of ground. Any objective sense of them is to the last degree painful, as any objective sense of the American life is, in its inequality and disproportion, but subjectively there are not so bad as that is, not so bad from the inside. At great cost they offer you an incomparable animal comfort and then realize for the average American an ideal of princely magnificence such as he has been instructed by all his traditions to regard as the chief good of success.

But for me the best thing about my hotel is that I can leave it when I will





and descend to the level of the street below, where I can at once lose myself in woods so sweet and friendly as our groves at home, and wander through their aisles unobscured by the crowds that make them their resort, so harmless, that even the spleen life there is unalloyed. This morning, as I sat on a bench in one of the most frequented walks, I could almost have touched the sparrows on the sprigs about me; a squirrel foraging for nuts, crouched on my knees, as if to explore my pockets. Of course, there is a policeman at every turn to see that no wrong is done these pretty creatures, and that no sort of trespass is committed by any in the domain of all; but I like to think that the security and amenity of the Park is proof of something besides the vigilance of its guardians; that it is a hint of a growing sense in the Americans that what is common is the personal charge of everyone in the community.

In the absence of the private interest here, I get back again to the Fair City, and the yet fairer cities of our own Altruria; and I hope that, if you cannot quite excuse my self-indulgence, in placing myself near the Park, you will at least be

able to account for it. You must remember the perpetual homelessness gnawing at my heart, and you must realize how doubly strange an Altrurian I am myself in any country of the plutocratic world, and then, I think, you will understand why I spend, and even waste, so much of my time lingering in this lovely place. As I turn from my page and look out upon it, I see the domes and spires of its foliage beginning to feel the autumn and taking on those wonderful sunset tints of the American year in its decline; when I enter through its pleasant paths, I feel the pith of the tender October air; but, better than these senses delights in everything of it and in it I recognize a prophecy of the true state which I believe America is destined yet to see established. It cannot be that the countless thousands who continually visit it, and share equally in its beauty, can all come away, insensible of the meaning of it; here and there someone must ask himself, and then ask others, why the whole of life should not be as generous and as just as this part of it, why he should not have a country as palpably his own as the Central Park is, where his ownership excludes the ownership of no other.



Some workmen out of work, as he trudges aimlessly through its paths, must wonder why the city cannot minister to his need as well as his pleasure, and not hold aloof from him till he is thrown a pauper on its fatal charities. If it can give him this magnificent garden for his forced leisure, why cannot it give him a shop where he can earn his bread?

I may be mistaken. His thoughts may never take this turn at all. The poor are slaves of habit, they hear what they have heard, they suffer on from generation to generation, and seem to look for nothing different. But this is what I think for the poor people in the Park, not alone for the workman recently out of work, but for the workman so long out of it that he has settled into one of the sodden tramps whom I meet now and then, looking like some forlorn wild beast, in the light of the autumn leaves. That is the great trouble, here, my dear Cyril; you cannot anywhere get away from the slavery of life. You would think that the rich for their own sakes

would wish to see conditions bettered so that they might not be confronted at every turn by the more loathsome of poverty. But they likewise are the slaves of habit, and go the way the rich have gone since the beginning of time in these unhappy countries where there are rich and poor. Sometimes I think that as Shakespeare says of the living and the dead, the rich and the poor here are — but as pictures 'to one another, without vital reality. It is only a luckless exile from Altruria like myself who sees them in their dreadful verities, and has a living sense of them, and I, too, lose this at times.

Sometimes I am glad to lose it, and this is why I would rather walk in the path-ways of the Park than in the streets of the city, for the contrasts here are not so frequent, if they are glaring still. I do get away from them now and then, for a moment or two, and give myself wholly up to the delight of the place. It has been treated with an artistic sense which admits best expression here, as with us, in the service of the community, but I do not think the Americans understood this, the civic spirit is as weak in them yet; and I doubt if the artists themselves are conscious of it, they are so nearly given the chance to serve the community. But somehow, when this chance offers, it finds the right man to profit by it, as in the

system of parks at Chicago, the gardened squares at Washington, and the Central Park in New York. Some of the decorative features here are bad, the sculpture is often foolish or worse, and the architecture is the outgrowth of a mood, where it is not merely passive. The best wayshave been exploited, and this is out of keeping with the rustic character of the place, but the whole design, and much of the detail in the treatment of the landscape, bears the stamp of a kindly and poetic genius. The Park is in course taken away from nature, but is rendered back to her, when all has been done to beautify





it, an American woodland, breaking into meadows, here and there, and brightened with pools and ponds lurking among rude masses of rock, and gleaming between leafy knolls and grassy levels. It stretches and widens away, mile after mile, in the heart of the city, a memory of the land as it was before the havoc of the city began, and giving to the city-prisoned poor an image of what the free country still is, everywhere. It is all penetrated by well-kept drives and paths; and it is in these paths that I find my pleasure. They are very simple woodland paths but for the asphalt, though here and there an effect of art is studied with charming felicity, once I mounted some steps graded in the rock, and came upon a plinth supporting the head of a poet, as I might have done in our gardens at home. But there is otherwise very little effect of gardening except near the large fountain by the principal lake where there is some flare of flowers on the sloping lawn. I need

note, so that you do not much notice the bronze angel atop, who seems to be holding her skirt to one side and picking her steps, and to be rather afraid of falling into the water. There is, in fact, only one thoroughly good piece of sculpture in the Park, which I was glad to find in sympathy with the principal suggestion of the landscape gardening: an American Indian hunting with his dog as the Indians must have hunted through the wilds here before the white men came.

This group is always a great pleasure to me, from whatever point I come upon it, or catch a glimpse of it, and I like to go and find the dog's prototype in the waves at the menagerie here which the city-often free to the wonder of the crowds constantly, throwing its grounds and houses. The captive brutes seem to be of that sobriety of good fellowship which makes all the frequenters of the Park, the tigers and the stupidly magnetic bears here an air different to me, at least, from tigers



you a photograph of this point and you will see the excess of the widest, with its sweeping stairways, and curves free-stone massiveness, — but it is charming in a way, too, and the basin of the fountain is full of lotuses and papyrus

and lilies shown for profit. Among the wilder sorts, I do not care so much for the wallowing hippopotamuses, and the lumbering elephants and the supercilious camels which one sees in menageries everywhere, as for those types which represent

a period as distinct as that of the American pioneers. I have rather a preference for going and standing upon the rugged basins of granite as they stand with their broad mouths open at the gale of their paddocks, expecting the children's ponies, and unconscious of their importance as survivors of the untold afflictions of their kind, which a quarter of a century ago blackened the western plains for miles and miles. There

certain days of the week. I like to watch them, and so do great numbers of other frequenters of the Park, apparently, and when I have walked far up beyond the reservoirs of city-water, which serve the purpose of natural lakes in the landscape, I like to come upon that expanse in the heart of the woods where the tennis players have stretched their nets over a score of courts, and the art stu-



are now only some forty or fifty left. For of all the herds of the pleistocene epoch, so few are conservative that the American buffalo is as rare as the old-fashioned American merchant, proud of his independence, and glorying in his citizenship.

In some other enclosures are pairs of the beautiful native deer, which I wish might be enlarged to the whole extent of the Park, as we have them in our Egyptian parks at home. But I can only imagine them on the great sweeps of grass, which recall the savannahs and prairies, though there is a very satisfactory flock of sheep which nibbles the herbage there, when these spaces are not thrown open to the ball-players who are allowed on

cents have set up their racks on the edges of the lawns, for what effect of the seasonal foliage they have the luck or the skill to get. It is all very sweet and friendly, and in keeping with the purpose of the Park, and its frank and simple treatment throughout.

From an Altrurian point of view I think this treatment is best for the greatest number of those who visit the place, and for whom the aspect of simple nature is the thing to be desired. Their pleasure in it, as far as the children are concerned, is variable and unstable enough, but I like, as I stroll along, to note the quiet content which the older people take in this domain of theirs, as they sit on the benches in the woodland

ways, or under the arching trees of the Mall, unattended by the company of some of the worst of all the bad statuses in the plutocratic world. They are mostly foreigners, I believe, but I find every now and then an American among them, who has released himself, or has been forced by want of work, to share their leisure for the time; I fancy he has always a bad conscience, if he is taking the time off, for there is a continual pressure of duty here, to add dollar to dollar, and provide for the future as well as the present need. The foreigner who has been bred up without the American's hope of advancement, has not his anxiety, and is a happier man, so far as that goes, but the Park imports something of its peace to every one, even to some of the people who drive, and form a spectacle for those who walk.

For are they all made to form a spectacle I never cease to marvel at, with a perpetual hunger of conjecture as to what they really think of one another. Apparently, they are all, whether they walk or whether they drive willing collectively, if not individually, to go on forever in the economy which perpetuates their inequality, and makes a mock of the polity which

assumes them their liberty. I cannot get used to the difference which money creates among men here, and whenever I take my eyes from it the thing seems to be credible, yet this difference is what the vast majority of Americans have agreed to accept, forever as right and justice. If I were to go and sit beside some poor man in the Park, and ask him why a man no better than he was driving before him in a luxurious carriage, he would say that the other man had the money to do it, and he would really think he had given me a reason, the man in the carriage himself could not regard the answer as more full and final than the man on the bench. They have both been nursed in the belief that it is a sufficient answer, and they would both regard me with the same misgiving, if I ventured to say that it was not a reason, for if their positions were to be at once reversed they would both acquiesce in the moral outflow of their inequality. The man on foot would think it had simply come his turn to drive in a carriage and the man whom he envied would think it was rather hard luck, but he would confess that it was what, at the bottom of his heart, he had always expected.





I have sometimes ventured to address a man walking or sitting by my side, if he appeared more than commonly intelligent, in the hope of getting at some personal philosophy, instead of the conventional scriptures of the artisans, but I have only had short or suspicious answers, or a bewildered stare for my pains. Only once have I happened to find any one who questioned the situation from a standpoint outside of it, and that was a shabbily dressed man whom I overheard talking to a poor woman in one of those pleasant arbors which crown certain points of rising ground in the Park. She had a paper bundle on the seat beside her, and she looked like some workwoman out of place, with that hapless, wretched air, which such people often have. Her poor little hands, which lay in her lap, were stiffened and hardened with work; but they were clean, except for the black of the nails, and she was very decently clad in garments beginning to fray into rags; she had a good, kind, faithful face, and she listened without answer to the man as he unfolded the truth to her concerning the

conditions in which they lived, if it may be called living. It was the wisdom of the poor, hopeless, jobless, as it now and then makes itself heard in the groans of the young and aged in the plutocratic world and then sinks again into silence. He showed her how she had no permanent place in the economy, not because she had momentarily lost work, but because in the nature of things as the Americans have them, it could only be a question of time when she must be thrown out of any place she found. He blamed no one, he only blamed the conditions, and with far more leniency than you or I should. I do not know whether his wisdom made the friendless woman happier, but I could not guess it, when he saw me listening, and asked me, - isn't that the truth? - I left him talking sadly on, and I never saw him again. He looked very threadbare, but he too was cleanly and decent in his dress, and not at all of that type of agitators of whom the Americans have made an effigy like nothing I have ever found here, as if merely for the childish pleasure of reviling it.



The whole incident was entirely pathetic to me, and yet I warn you, my dear Cyril, that you must not romance the poor, here, or imagine that they are morally better than the rich; you must not fancy that a poor man, when he comes to be a poor man, would be kinder for having been poor. He would perhaps often, and certainly more logically, be unkind, for there would be mixed with his variety of possession a quality of cruel fear, an apprehension of loss, which the man who had always been rich would not feel. The self-made man in America, when he has made himself of money, seems to have been deflected by his original destitution, and I think that if I were in need I would rather take my chance of pity from the man who had never been poor. Of course this is generalization, and there are instances to the contrary, which at once occur to me. But what is absolutely true, is that glaucous prosperity, the selfish joy of having, at the necessary cost of those who cannot have, is blighted by the feeling of insecurity, which every man here has in his secret soul, and which the man who has known want must have in greater measure than the man who has never known want.

There is, indeed, no security for wealth, which the Americans think the chief good

of life, in the western civil nations. When a man has gathered his millions, he cannot be reduced to want, probably; but while he is amassing them while he is in the midst of the fight, or the game, as most men are here, there are ninety-five chances out of a hundred that he will be beaten. Perhaps it is best so, and I should be glad it was so, if I could believe that the common danger bred a common kindness between the rich and the poor here; but it seems not to do so. As far as I can see, the rule of chance, which they all live under, does nothing more than reduce them to a community of anxiety.

To the eye of the stranger they have the monotony of the sea, where some teeth wave pass a little higher than the rest, but sink at last, or break upon the rocks or sands, as inevitably as the other ones. Their inequality is without picturesqueness and without distinction. The people in the carriages are better dressed than those on foot, especially the women; but otherwise they do not greatly differ from the most of these. The spectacle of the driving in the Park has none of that dignity which, our commentators tell us, characterizes such spectacles in European capitals. This may be because many people of the finest social quality are still



in the country, or it may be because the differences growing out of vanity can never have the effect of those growing out of birth; that a platocracy can never have the last wicked grace of an aristocracy. It would be impossible, for instance, to secure any reverence about the figures you see in the carriages here; they do not even suggest the poetry of ages of prescriptive wrong; they are of today, and there is no guessing whether they will be of tomorrow or not.

In Europe, this sort of tragedy-act is at least well played; but in America, you always have the feeling that the performance is that of second-rate amateurs, who, if they would really live out the life implied by America, would be the superiors of the whole world. I have, my dear Cyril, not a very keen sense of humor, as you know; but even I am sometimes moved to laughter by some of the things I see among them. Oh, you perhaps think that I ought to be moved by the sight of a little, heavily dressed lady, killing in the corner of a ponderous landau, with the effect of holding fast lest she should be shaken out of it, while two powerful horses, in jangling, silver-plated harness, with the due equipment of coach-

man and footman, seated on their bright-buttoned *accompany* on the box together, get her majestically over the ground at a slow trot. This is what I sometimes see, with not so much reverence as I feel for the simple mother pushing her baby carriage on the asphalt beside me and doubtless envying the wonderful creature in the landau. Sometimes it is a fat old man in the landau; or a husband and wife, not speaking, or a pair of gray old ladies, who look as if they had lived so long aloof from these ridiculous notions that they could not be too severe with the mere sight of them. Generally speaking, the people in the carriages do not seem any happier for being there. Though I have sometimes seen a jolly party of strangers in a public carriage, drawn by those broken-kneed horses which seem peculiarly devoted to this service.

The best place to see the driving is at a point where the different drivesways converge, not far from the Egyptian obelisk which the Khedive gave the Americans some years ago and which they have set up here as one of the finest ornaments of the Park. He had of course no moral right to rob his miserable land of any one of its characteristic monuments, but I do





not know that it is not as well in New York as in Alexandria. If its heart of aged stone could feel the terrible contrast of conditions in the world outside of Althuria, it must be aware of the essential unity of the civilizations beside the Nile and beside the Hudson, and if Cleopatra's needle had really an eye to see, it must perceive that there is nothing truly exotic in either. As the great tide of dissatisfied and weary wealth rolls by its base here, in the fantastic variety of its equipages, does it discern so much difference between their occupants and the occupants of the chariots that sweep beneath it in the capital of the Pharaohs two thousand years ago? I can imagine it at times working such an eye and cocking its dome the gilded cup with which the New Yorkers have lately crowned it. They pass it in all kinds of vehicles, and there are all kinds of people in them, though there are sometimes no people at all, as when the scenarios have been sent out to exercise the horses, for nobody's good or pleasure, and in the spirit of that atrocious waste which runs through the whole plutocratic life. I have now and then seen a gentleman driving a four-in-hand, with every-

thing to minister to his vanity in the exact imitation of a nobleman driving a four-in-hand over English roads, and with no one to be drawn by his crop-tailed boys or blacks, except himself and the solemn-looking groom on his perch. I have wondered how much more nearly equal they were in their aspirations and instincts than either of them imagined. A gentleman driving a pair, shrewd or tardient, with a groom on the rumble, for no purpose except to express his quality, is a common sight enough; and sometimes you see a lady illustrating her consequence in like manner. A lady driving while a gentleman occupies the seat behind her, is a sight which always affects me like the sight of a man taking a woman's arm, as walking, as the man of an undervalued sort is apt to do here.

Honey-looking women, who are, to ladies at least, what honey-looking men are to gentlemen, drive together often they are really ladies, and sometimes they are nice young girls, out for an innocent dash and chat. They are all very much and very unimpressively dressed, whether they sit in state behind the regular coachman and footman, or handle the

reins themselves. Now and then you see a lady, with a dog on the seat beside her, for an airing, but not often a child; once or twice I have seen one with a large spaniel seated comfortably in front of her, and I have asked myself what would happen if, instead of the dog, she had taken into her carriage some pale woman or weary old man, such as I sometimes are gazing patiently after her. The thing would be possible in Altruia, but I assure you, my dear Cyril, it would be altogether impossible in America. I should be the first to feel the want of keeping in it, for, however much wealth may be here, it has equipped itself with all the apparatus of long inherited riches, which it is as strongly bound to maintain intact as if it were really old and hereditary—perhaps more strongly. I must say that, mostly, its owners look very tired of it, or of something, in public, and that the American plutocrats, if they have not the

distinction of an aristocracy, have at least the ennui.

But these stylish tumbrels form only a part of the spectacle in the Park drive-ways, though they form, perhaps, the larger part. Bicyclars weave their dangerous and devoted way everywhere through the roads, and seem to be forbidden the traffic-paths, where from point to point you catch a glimpse of the riders. There are boys and girls in village carts, the happiest of all the people you see, and there are cheap-looking haggies, like those you meet in the country here, with each a young man and young girl in them, as if they had come in from some remote suburb; tumbrels shudders yet, with poor old horses, poke about with some elderly pair, like a farmer and his wife. There are family caravans, with friendly-looking families old and young, getting the good of the Park together in a long, leisurely jog; and open haggies with yellow wheels and red-





fish men in them behind their wide-spread gill-nets, or with some sharp-faced young fellow getting all the speed out of a lively span that the mounted policeman, stationed at intervals along the driveway, will allow. The driver vehicles are of all types, patterned like every thing else that is fine in America, upon something fine in Europe, but just now a very high-backed phantom appears to be most in favor, and in fact I get a great deal of pleasure out of these myself, as I do not have to sit stiffly up in them. They make me think somehow of those eighteenth-century English novels, which you and I used to delight in so much, and which filled us with a romantic curiosity concerning the times when young ladies like Evelina drove out in phaetons, and were the passionate pursuit of Lord Orville and Sir Clement Willoughby.

You will be curious to know how the Americans pub-

licly carry their trawesty of the European aristocratic life; and here I am, somewhat as a lion, for I only know that life from the relations of our emigrants, and from the glimpses I had of it in my brief sojourn in England on my way here. But I should





say, from what I have seen of the driving in the Park, where I suppose I have not yet seen the parody at its height, it does not err on the side of excess. The equipages, when they are fine, are rather simple, and the drivers are such as respect a proprietary goodness in coat buttons, silver or gilt, and in a darker or lighter drab of the cloth the servants wear; they are often in brown or dark green. Now and then you see the tightly closed legs and top boots and cockaded hat of a groom, but this is offset on a four-wheeled coach, or the rumble of a tandem cart, the seat of the fire-breasted republican is rarely bowed before it on the box of a heavy carriage. I have seen nothing like an attempt at family colour in the trappings of the coachman and horses.

Yes, I should say that the imitation was quite within the bounds of good taste. The bad taste is in the wish to imitate Europe at all, but with the abundance of money, the imitation is simply inevitable. As I have told you before and I cannot insist too much upon the fact, there is no American life for wealth; there is no native formula for the expression of social superiority; because America, like Altruria, means equality if it means any-

thing, in the last analysis. But without economic equality there can be no social equality, and, finally, there can be no political equality; for money corrupts the franchise, the legislature and the judiciary here, just as it used to do with us in the old days before the Revolution. Of all the American statutes, none seems to me more deplorable than the provision that with their conditions it can ever be otherwise, so that simple manhood can assert itself successfully in the face of such power as money wields over the very soul of man. At best, the common man can only break down time to time, into insolent defiance, pending his chance to make himself an unnecessary man with money. In all this show here on the Park driveway, you get no effect so vivid as the effect of sterility as that liberty without equality which seems to satisfy the Americans. A man may come into the Park with any sort of vehicle, so that it is not for the carriage of merchandise, and he is free to spuff what might be a fine effect with the intrusion of whatever signifier of turnout he will. He has as much right there as any one, but the right to be shabby in the presence of people who are fine is not one that we should envy him. I do not think

that he can be comfortable in it, for the superiority around him puts him to shame, as it puts the poor man to shame here at every turn in life, though some Americans, with an impudence that is pitiable, will tell you that it does not put him to shame; that he feels himself as good as any one. They are always talking about human nature and what it is, and what it is not, but they try in their blind worship of inequality, to refuse the first and simplest knowledge of human nature, which testimony of itself in every thrush of their own hearts, as they try even to refuse a knowledge of the Divine nature, when they attribute to the Father of all a design in the injustice they have themselves created.

To me the lesson of Central Park is that where it is used in the spirit of fraternity and equality, the pleasure in it is pure and fine, and that its frequenters have for the moment a hint of the beauty which might be perpetually in their lives; but

where it is invaded by the plutocratic millions of the stock that runs all round it in the city outside, its joys are faded with contempt and envy, the worst passions that tear the human heart. Ninety-nine Americans out of a hundred, have never seen a man in livery. They have never dreamt of such a display as this in the Park. The sight of it would be as strange to them as it would be to all the Africans. Yet with their consciences, I fear that at sight of it, ninety-nine Americans out of every hundred, would hasten their turn of the wheel, their throw of the dice, so that they might succeed to a place in it, and feast their luxury in the face of poverty, and shake hands with their peers. They would not feel, as we should, the essential immorality of its display; they would not perceive that its ludicrous disproportion was the outward expression of an inward ugliness.

A. HOWARD.



DEW.

By FRANK THOMPSON LAMARCA.

POSSION in the night, a silver shield,—
Gleams at dawn the dewy field,
To parry every golden dart
Assued by the Sun at Earth's glad heart.



THE ENTRANCE TO THE PARK FROM FIFTH AVENUE.

LETTERS OF AN ALTRUISTIC TRAVELLER.

BY W. D. HOWARD.

ASPECTS AND IMPRESSIONS OF A PLUTOCRATIC CITY

IV.

New York, October 30, 1893.

My dear Cyril:

If you will look at a plan of New York, you will see that Central Park is really in the center of the place, if a thing which has length only, or is so nearly without breadth or thickness, can be said to have a center. South of the Park, the whole island is dense with life and business—it is pretty solidly built up on either side—but to the northward the blocks of houses are no longer of a compact massiveness; they struggle up, at irregular intervals, from open fields, and sink again, on the streets

pushed beyond them into the simple country, where even a suburban character is lost. It can only be a few years, at most, before all the empty spaces will be occupied, and the town, such as it is, and such as it seems to have been ever since the colonial period, will have anchored itself fast in the rock that makes less the larger half of it, and imparted its peculiar effect to every street—an effect of arrogant ostentatiousness, of superficial and formal gentility, of unmediate neglect and overcare.

You will see more of the neglect and overcare in the avenues which penetrate the city's mass from north to south, and



"THE FILTHY ACTIVITIES OF BUSINESS."

more of the superficial and formal gentility in the streets that cross these avenues from east to west; but the arrogant ostentation you will find nearly everywhere, except in some of the newest quarters westward from the Park, and still farther uptown. These are really very clean, but they have a bare look, as if they were not yet inhabited, and, in fact, many of the houses are still empty. Lower down, the streets are often as shabby and as squalled as the avenues that run parallel with the river sides, and at least two of the avenues are as decent as the loveliest cross street. But all are more or less unkept; the sweepings lie in little heaps in the gutters for days; and in a city without alley barrels of ashes and kitchen offal find the earthenware and other things offensive to the nose and eye everywhere.

Of late, a good many streets and several avenues have been asphalted, and the din of wheels on the rough pavement no longer torments the ear so cruelly; but there is still the sharp clatter of the houses' iron shoes everywhere; and their pulverised mass, which forms no great part of the city's dust, and is constantly taken into people's stomachs and lungs, seems to blow more freely about on

the asphalt than on the old-fashioned pavements: scraps of paper, straw, fruit-pool, and all manner of minor waste and rubbish, litter both. Every city of the plutocratic world must be an outrage to Aflurian senses, as you already understand, but I doubt if I could ever make you understand the abominable condition of the New York streets during the snowy months of the past winter, when for weeks no attempt was made to remove their accumulated filth. At their best, they would be intolerable to us; at their worst, they are inconceivable and wholly indescribable. The screen withdraws their condition but the mind refuses to accept the evidence of the senses; and nothing can be more pathetic, more comical, than the resolution of the New Yorkers to ignoring it.

But if I were once to go into detail, in my effort to make New York intelligible to you, there would be no end to it, and I think I had better get back to my topographical generalities. I have given you some notion of our position at the gate of Central Park, and you must imagine all my studies of the city beginning and ending here. I have to linger near it, because it affords a hope for New York that I feel

so distinctly nowhere else in New York, though certain traits of the city's essentially transitional and experimental nature sometimes suggest that it may be the first city of America to Altrurianize. The upper classes are at least used to the political sway of the lower classes, and when they realize that they never can have any hope but in bettering the lot of their rulers, the end will not be far off for it will then be seen that this can be lastingly done only through a change of the economic conditions.

In the meantime, the Park, which is the physical heart of New York, is Altrurian already. In the contrasts of rich and poor, which you can no more escape there than you can in the city streets, you are, indeed, afflicted with that sense of absurdity, of impossibility, so comforting to the American when he strives to imagine Altrurian conditions, and gets no farther than to imagine the coarseness of a plutocratic civilization in them. He imagines that, in an Altrurian state, people must have the same motives, interests, activities which he has always known them to

have, and which they carry with them into Central Park, and only lay aside for a moment in response to the higher appeal which its equal opportunities make. But then at moments these over-worn, greivd worn souls do put off the burden of their inequality, their superiority or their inferiority, and meet on the same broad level of humanity; and I wish, my dear Cyell, that you would always keep this one great oasis in your thoughts, as you follow me in my wanderings through this vast commercial desert. It is the token, if not the pledge, of happier things, and, while I remain here, it will be always to me a precious image of home.

When I leave it I usually take one of the avenues southward, and then turn eastward or westward on one of the cross-streets whose perspective appeals to my curiosity, and stroll through it to one of the rivers. The avenues, as you will see, are filthier or slothier in manner, and they stretch, some farther than others, up and down the island, but most of them end in the old town, where its irregularity begins, at the south, and several are inter-



"That distant spireway never was real Fifth."

rupted by the different parks at the north. Together with the streets that intersect them between the old town and Central Park, they form one of the most characteristic parts of modern New York. Like the streets, they are numbered, as you know, rather than named, from a want of imagination, or from a preference of mere convenience to the poetry and associations that cluster about a name, and can never cling to a number, or from a business impatience to be quickly done with the matter. This must rather doubt itself, however, when a hurried man undertakes to tell you that he lives at three hundred and

quiet, built up with comfortable dwellings, and even clean, as cleanliness is understood in New York.

But it is Fifth avenue which divides the city lengthwise nearest the middle, and it is this avenue which affects the tone of style and comfort in the other avenues on either hand, and to all the streets that intersect it. Madison avenue is its rival, and has suffered less from the invasion of shops and hotels, but a long stretch of Fifth avenue is still the most aristocratic quarter of the city, and is upon the whole its finest thoroughfare. I need not say that we should not, in *Athens*, think any

New York street fine; but, generally, Fifth avenue and the cross-streets in its better part have a certain regularity in their mansions of brownstone, which recalls to one, if it does not actually give again, the pleasure we get from the symmetry at home. They are at least not so chaotic as they might be, and though they always suggest money more than taste, I cannot at certain moments, and under the favor of an evening sky, deny them a sort of solemnly and befuddling beauty.

There are not many of these cross-streets which have remained intact from the business of the other avenues. They have always a drinking saloon, or a provision store, or an apothecary's shop, at the corners where they



A TYPICAL NEW-YORK CROSS-STREET

seventy-five on One Hundred and Fifty-seventh street. Towards the river the avenues grow shabbier and shabbier, though this statement must be qualified, like all general statements. Seventh avenue, on the west, is pleasanter than Sixth avenue, and Second avenue, on the east, is more agreeable than Third avenue. In fact, the other afternoon, as I strolled near to the East river, I found several blocks of Avenue A, which runs nearest it, very

interesting; the modest and judicious in them almost before the residents are aware. Beyond Sixth avenue, or Seventh at furthest, on the west, and Fourth avenue or Lexington, on the east, they lose their gentler character; their dwellings degenerate into apartment houses, and then into tenement-houses of lower and lower grade till the rude traffic and the offensive industries of the *river shores* are reached.

But once more I must hedge, for somewhere a street is respectable almost to the water on one side or the other, and there are whole neighborhoods of pleasant dwellings for down town, which seem to have been forgotten by the enterprise of business or neglected by its expense, and to have escaped for a time at least the contagion of poverty. Business and poverty are everywhere slowly or swiftly eating their way into the haunts of respectability, and destroying its pleasant homes. They already have the whole of the old town to themselves. In large spaces of it no one dwells but the jostlers with their families, who keep the sky-scraping edifices where business finds the time away; and by night, in the streets where migrants throng by day, no one walks but the outcast and the wretch.

Many of these business streets are the handsomest in the city, with a good sky line, and an architectural ideal too good for the sordid uses of commerce. This is often realized in antipathetic lines, but often there is good honest work in stone, and an effect better than the best of Fifth avenue. But this is stupid and wasteful, as everything unnecessary is in the plutocratic conditions. It is not for the pleasure of no one's taste or sense, the business men who traffic in these edifices have no time for their beauty, or no perception of it; the porters and truckmen and expressmen, who toil and wail in these thoroughfares, have no use for the grandeur that catches the eye of a chance passer from Alltrium.

Other spaces are abandoned to the poverty which festers in the squalid houses and overruns day and night in the squalid streets; but business presses closer and harder upon these refugees of its foster-child, not to say its offspring, and it is only

a question of time before it shall wholly possess them. It is only a question of time before all the comfortable quarters of the city, westward from the old town to the Park, shall be invaded, and the people driven to the streets building up on the west end and east of it for a little longer sojourn. Where their last stay shall be, heaven knows; perhaps they will be forced into the country; or before that happens they may be rescued from themselves by the advance of Alltriumization.

In this sort of invasion, however, it is poverty that seems mostly to come first, and it is business that follows and holds



ABANDONED BY THE WHEELWHEEL CARRIAGE

the conquest, though that is far from being always the case. Whether it is so or not, however, poverty is certain at some time to impart its taint, for it is perpetual here from generation to generation, like death itself. In the plutocratic conditions, poverty is incurable; the very hope of cure is laughed to scorn by those who cling the closest to these conditions. It may be better at one time,

and worse at another, but it must always be, somehow, till time shall be no more. It is from overhauling to overhauling, they say, with an unconscious blasphemy of the ever-enduring Good, and, unless the conditions change, I must confess that they have reason for their faith in evil.

When I come home from these walks of mine, heart sick, as I usually do, I have a vision of the wretched quarters through which I have passed, as blotches of disease upon the river body, as knotholes in the bark, destined to eat deeper and

deeper—houses in always more picturesque than a street of hawthornes and roses, which the same thoroughfare usually is before it slopes to either river. The fronts of the edifices are decorated with the iron balconies and ladders of the fire escapes, and have in the perspective a false air of poverty, which is traversed in their rear by the linen thickly woven from the windows to the tall poles set between the backs of the houses, and fluttering with drying clothes as with banners.

The sidewalks swarm with children, and the air rings with their clamor, as they fly back and forth at play; on the thresholds, the mothers sit nursing their babies, and the old women gossip together, young girls lean from the cornucopias, show and stoil, or flirt from the doorways with the hucksters who have their carts in the street, while they come forward with some haggis in fruit or vegetables, and then resume their homely progress and their jarring creak. The place has all the attractions of close neighborhood, which the poor love, and which affords them for nothing the spectacle of the human drama, with themselves for actors. In a picture it would be most pleasingly effective, far then you could be in it, and yet have the distance on it which it needs. But to be in it, and not have the distance, is to inhale the stench of the neglected



ALL THIS MAKES YOU HATE YOUR HOME—

deeper into it, and I am haunted by the scene of them, until I plunge deep into the Park, and wash my consciousness clean of it all for a while. But when I am actually in these leprous spots, I become hardened, for the moment, to the deeply underlying fact of human discomfort. I feel their miseries, with a devilish indifference to that race, or that defect, which must so largely constitute the charm of the picturesque. A street of

ed street, and to catch that yet sadder and drearier poverty—small which herds them from the open doorways. It is to see the children quarrelling in their games, and heaving each other in the dirt and rolling each other in the gutter, like the little savage outlaws they are. It is to see the work-worn look of the mothers, the squallor of the babies, the haggard ugliness of the old women, the slovenly looseness of the young girls. All this



"LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE RIVER, SOUTH-
EAST FROM THE RIVER VIEW."

makes you hasten your pace down to the river, where the tall buildings break and dwindle into stables and shanties of wood, and finally end in the piers, commanding the whole stretch of the mighty waterway with its shipping, and the wooded heights of its western bank.

I am supposing you to have walked down a street of tenement-houses to the North river, as the New Yorkers call the Hudson, and I wish I could give you some notion of the beauty and majesty of the stream. You must turn to the photographs I send you for that beauty and majesty, and for some sense of the means and ignoble effect of the city's invasion of the farther shore. The ugliness is, indeed, only worse in degree, but not in kind, than that of all city waterfronts in plutocratic countries. Instead of pleasant houses, with green lawns and orchards sloping to the bank, as we have them in Attica, they have here the uncon-

able self-assertion of business, which is first in the people's thoughts and must necessarily be given the first place in their cities. Huge factories and foundries, lumber yards, breweries, slaughter houses and warehouses, sloppily interspersed with stables and hovels, and drinking saloons, disfigure the shore, and in the nearest vicinity, the freight trains come and go on lines of railroads, in all this middle portion of New York. South of it, in the business section, the poverty section, the river region is a mere chaos of industrial and commercial strife and poorer watch-towers. North of it there are gardened driveways following the shore, and even at many points between, where you finally reach the river, there is a kind of peace, or at least a trace to the frailer activities of business. To be sure the heavy tractors grind up and down the long piers, but on either side the docks are full of leisurely canal boats, and if you could come with me in the late afternoon, you would see the smoke curling upward from their chim-



"LOOKING NORTH FROM THE RIVER, NORTH-
WEST FROM THE RIVER VIEW."



"THE BUSY HARBOR WITH ITS SHIPS."

rook, as from the chimneys of so many rustic cottages, and smell the evening meal cooking within, while the convalesces lounged at the gangway latches for a breath of the sunset air, and the boatmen smoked on the gunwales as indolently pined the long sweeps of their prisms. All the hurry and turmoil of the city is lost among these people, whose clumsy craft recall the guiney wheel levels remote from the metropolis, and the slow movement of life in the quiet country ways. Some of the soldiers from the training-house stroll down on the pier with their rifles in their arms and watch their men-kind of all ages fishing along the sides of the dock, or casting their lines far out into the current at the end. They do not seem to catch many fish, and never large ones, but they silently enjoy the sport, which they probably find leisure for in the general want of work in these hard times, if they wear a little at their back, now and then, it is, perhaps, no more than their luck deserves. Some do not even fish, but sit with their legs dangling over the water, and watch the well-lugs, or the

logging sloops that pass, with now and then a larger sail, or a lowering passenger steam boat. Far down the stream they can see the forests of masts, hanging either aloft, and following the point of the island round, and up into the great channel called the Red River. These ships seemed as multitudinous as the houses that spread everywhere from them over the shore farther than the eye can reach. They bring the commerce of the world to this mighty city, which, with all its riches, is the parent of such misery, and with all its wealth abounds in idle men who cannot find work. The ships look happy and free, in the stream, but they are of the plutocratic world, too, as well the houses, and let them spread their wings over so widely, they will bear with them the slavery of the poor, as we know too well from the successful tales of the cutthroats on our coast.

You must lose the thought of what is below the surface everywhere and in everything in America, if you would possess your soul from the pain perpetually threatening it, and I am afraid, my dear

Cyrl, that if you could be suddenly transported to my side, and behold what un-durban all life here, with your flash Alfreian eyes, you would not be more shocked at the sight than of me, who, knowing it all, can ever have a moment's peace in my knowledge. But I do have many moments' peace, through the mere exhaustion of consciousness, and I must own with whatever shame you would have me feel, that sometimes I have moments of pleasure. The other evening I walked over to the East river through one of those fetid streets, and I reached the water-side just as the soft night was beginning to fall in all its autumnal beauty. The afterglow died down the river, while I lay upon a parapet over a gulf covered out of the back for a street, and experienced that artistic delight which cultivated people are often proud of feeling here, in the aspect of the long prison island which breaks the expanse of the channel. I knew the buildings on it were prisons, and that the men and women in there, had before, could only come out of there worse than before, and doomed to a life of misery and of crime. I was aware that they were such an image of

that lawless and hopeless perdition which the cruelty of men imagines God has prepared for the souls of the damned, but I could not see the barred windows of those cells in the waning light. I could only see the trees along their walks, their dim lawns and gardens, and the castellated forms of the prisons; and the æsthetic sense, which in these unhappy lands is careful to keep itself pure from pity, was troubled with an agreeable impression of something old and far. The dark thickened, and the vast steamboats which ply between the city and the New England ports on Long Island Sound, and daily convey whole populations of passengers between New York and Boston, began to sweep by silently, swiftly, harmless masses on the black water. Their lights shone at bow and stern, floated with them like luminescent planets; the lights of lower craft dipped by, and came and went in the distance; the lamps of the river and further shores twinkled into sight, and a peace that ignored all the sorrow of it, fell upon the scene.

It was such peace as runs along roads to you in a life like this. If you would have any rest you must ignore a thousand



GENERAL VIEW OF THE CITY



"THE WASTED BEAUTY OF AN UNLIVED LIFE."

facts, which, if you recognize them, turn and rend you, and smelt their poison into your incensed soul. In your pleasures you must forget the deprivation which your indulgence implies; if you fast, you must shut out the thought of them that starve; when you lie down in your bed, you cannot sleep if you remember the homeless who have nowhere to lay their heads. You are everywhere beleaguered by the armies of want and woe, and in the still watches of the night you can hear their pitiable wailing calling to one another, "All is ill! All is ill!" and heaving their heads to the apathy of despair.

You, if you would have any comfort of your life here, you must have it in disregard of your fellow-men, your kindred, your brethren, unlike yourself and such

joined to the same enjoyments and sufferings, whose hard lot forbids them comfort. This is a fact, however, which the civilization of all plutocratic countries is unable to deny, and the fortunate children of that civilization try to live in a fiction of the desert of the unfortunate; they sign that these are more indolent or vicious than themselves, and so are, somehow, condemned by the judgments of God to

their abandonment and destruction. But at the bottom of their hearts they know that this pretence is false, and that it is a mere chance they are not themselves of the unfortunate. They must shut their minds to this knowledge as they must shut them to the thought of all the misery which their prosperity is based on, or, as I say, they can have no peace.

You can reason to the effect upon character among them, among the best of them. It is a consequence which you would find unspeakably shocking, yet which, if you personally knew their conditions, you would be loath to, for you would perceive that, while the conditions endure, there is no help, no hope for them. The wonder is that, in such circumstances as theirs, they ever permit their sympathies the rage that these sometimes



"THE CONTRASTED PAINS OF THE POOR."

take, only to return upon them in an anguish of repugnancy. None but the short-sighted and thoughtless as a phylometry can lastingly satisfy themselves even with a constant giving, for the thoughtful know that charity corrupts and debases, and that finally it is no remedy. So these take refuge from themselves in a willing ignorance, sometimes lasting, sometimes transient, of the things in their life that disturb and displease them. It is the only thing to do here, my dear Cyril, and I will not deny that I have come to do it, like the rest. Since I cannot relieve the wrong I see, I have learned often to shut my eyes to it, with the effect, which most Americans experience, that, since there seems to be no way of righting the wrong,

the wrong must be a sort of right. Yes, this infernal juggle of the mind operates itself in me, too, at times, so that I doubt the reality of my whole happy life in the past, I doubt Altruism, I doubt you.

I beseech you, therefore, to write me as often as you can, and as fully and frankly. Tell me of our country, remind me of the state where men dwell together as brothers; and every device to make it living and real to me; for here I often lose the memory and the sense of it, and at all times I have a weakened sense of the justice and mercy that I once thought ruled this world, but which the Americans think rules only the world to come.

A. HOMER.



"THE EAST STRAIGHTENED BEING ABSENTLY SO."

SHORTS

BY CHARLES W. TUCKER

THE purple clusters turn to gray,
And ghastly gleam the white;
Sweet o' the blue has drowned the day,
Dim shadows-stead up the garden-way
Thro' the still Spring night
This is their hour who loved the Spring
With a love o'er deep to die,
Now, when the leafy moths take wing,
Stony they, as mute in their wandering,
Under the violet sky,
So shall we meet and wander here,
Dear, when we come to die,
So shall it be in that strange year
When you no longer see you, my dear,
And I no more am I.



LETTERS OF AN ALTRURIAN TRAVELLER.

By W. D. HOWARD.

PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTRASTS AND CONTRADICTIONS.

V.

New York, November 13, 1893.

My dear Cyril:

In my last I tried to give you some notion of the form and structure of this strange city, but I am afraid that I did it very vaguely and insufficiently. I do not suppose that I could ever do it fully, and perhaps the attempt was foolish. But I hope that I may, without greater folly, at least offer to share with you the feeling I have concerning American life, and more of all concerning New York life, that it is forever on the way, and never arrives. This is the effect that I constantly receive in the streets here and especially in the avenues which are fully named so far as names means approach merely. They are roadways which people get back and forth to, in their haste from nowhere to nowhere, as it would seem to me. Of course they do physically reach their places of business destinations in the morning, and their places of eating and sleeping uptown in the even-

ing; but morally they are forever in transition. Whether they are bent upon business, or bent upon pleasure, the Americans, or certainly the New Yorkers, perpetually postpone the good of life, as we know it in Altruria, and as it is known in some tranquil countries even of the plutocratic world. They make money, but they do not have money, for there is no such thing as the sensible possession of money, and hardly of the things that money can buy. They seek enjoyment and they find excitement, for joy is the blessing of God, and like every good gift comes unsought, and flies past us. They know this, as well as we do, and in certain moments of dejection, in the hours of pain, in the days of sorrow, they realize it, but at other times they ignore it. If they did not ignore it they could not live; they say, and they appear to think that by ignoring it they do live, though to me there is nothing truly vital in their existence.

The greatest problems of their metropolis

is not how best to be in this place or that, but how fastest to go from one to the other, and they have made guesses at the middle, bad and worse, on each of the avenues, which, in their character of mass roadways, look as if the different car-trucks had been in there first, and the buildings, high and low, high chimneys along their sides afterwards. This is not the fact, of course, and it is not so much the effect on Fifth avenue, and Madison avenue, and Lexington avenue, which are streets of dwellings, solidly built up, like the cross streets. But it is undoubtedly the effect on all the other avenues, in great part of their extent. They very but little in appearance otherwise, from east to west, except so far as the elevated railroads disfigure them, if thoroughfare so shabby and repulsive as they mostly are, can be said to be disfigured, and not beautified by whatever can be done to hide any part of their ugliness. Where this is left to make its full impression upon the spectator, there are lines of horse-cars perpetually jangling up and down except on Fifth avenue, where they have stages, as the New Yorkers call the unwieldy and unsightly vehicles that ply there, and on Second avenue, where they have electric cars, something like our own, in principle. But the horse-cars run even under the elevated tracks, and you have absolutely no ex-

perience of none in the Afternoon life which can enable you to conceive of the hellish din that hovers upon the scene, when at some corner two cars encounter on the parallel tracks below, while two trains roar and shriek and bang on the rails overhead, and a turmoil of rattling express wagons, heavy drays and trucks, and carts, hackes, carriages and huge teams rolls itself between and beneath the prime agent of the uproar. The noise is not only deafening, it is bewildering; you cannot know which side the danger threatens most, and you literally take your life in your hand when you cross in the midst of it. Broadway, which traverses the district I am thinking of, is a diagonal line till it loses its distinctive character beyond the Park, as the course of the cable cars. These are propelled by an endless chain running underneath the pavement with a silent speed that is more dangerous even than the carelessness rush on the avenues. Now and then the apparatus for gripping the chain will not release it, and then the car rushes wildly over the track, running amuck through everything in its way, and spreading terror on every hand. When under control the long columns advance swiftly, from either direction, at intervals of half a minute, with a monotonous alarm of their gongs, and the foot passenger has to look well to his way if he ventures



"FOR BARE YOUR LIFE IN YOUR HAND WHEN YOU CROSS IN THE MIDST OF IT."

across the track, but in avoiding one car another roll him under its wheels.

Apparently, the danger is guarded as well as it can be, and it has simply to be taken into the account of life in New York, for it cannot be shifted, and no one is to be blamed for what is the fault of everyone. It is true that there ought not, perhaps, to be any track in such a thoroughfare, but it would be hard to prove that people could get on without it, as they did before the theft of the street for the original horse car track. Perhaps it was not a theft, but at all events and at the best, the street was given away by the city to an adventurer who wished to lay the tracks in it for his private gain, and none of the property owners along the line could help themselves. There is nothing that the Americans hold so dear, you know, or count so sacred, as private property; life and limb are cheap in comparison, but private enterprise is allowed to violate the rights of private property, from time to time here, in the most dramatic way.

I do not speak, now, of the railroad companies, which have gulphed the country, in its whole length and breadth, and which are empowered by their franchises to destroy the homes of the living and desecrate the graves of the dead, in running their lines from point to point. These companies do pay something, as little as they may, or as much as they must; but the street-car company which took possession of Broadway never paid the abutters anything, I believe; and the elevated railroad companies are still awaiting payment of damages on the four avenues which they occupied for their way up and down the city without offering compensation to the property owners

along their route. If the community had built these roads, it would have indemnified everyone, for the community is always just when it is the expression of the common honesty here; and if it is ever unjust, it is because the uncommon dishonesty has contrived to corrupt it.

Yet the Americans trust themselves so little in their civic embodiment that the movement for the public ownership of the railroads makes head slowly against an immeasurable prejudice. Last winter, when the problem of rapid transit pressed sorely upon the New Yorkers, the commission in charge could find no way to solve it but by offering an extension of franchise to the corporation which has already the monopoly of it. There was no question of the city's building the roads, and working them at cost; and if there had been, there would have been no question of submitting the project to those whose interests are involved. They have no such thing here as the referendum, and the Americans who are supposed to make their own laws, merely elect their representatives, and have no voice themselves in approving or condemning legislation.

The elevated roads and the cable road had no right to be, on the terms that the New Yorkers have them, but they are by far the best means of transit in the city, and I must say that if they were not chosen, they would offer great comfort and great facility to the public. This is especially true of the elevated roads, which, when you can get their moral offense out of your mind, are always delightful in their ease and airy swiftness. The tracks are lifted upon iron piers, from twenty to fifty feet above the street, according to the inequality of the surface, and you fly smoothly along between the second and third story windows of the houses, which are shops below and dwellings above, on the avenues. The stations, though they have the pressing effect of over-crowd, and look dirty and unkempt, are rather pretty in themselves, and you reach them, at frequent intervals, by flights of not ungraceful iron steps. The elevated roads are always picturesque, with here and there a sweeping curve that might almost be called beautiful.

They darken the avenues, of course, and fill them with an obscenable uproar. Yet traffic goes underneath, and life goes



THE STREET-CAR IN NEW YORK.

on alongside and overhead, and the city has adjusted itself to them, as a man adjusts himself to a chronic disease. I do not know whether they add to the festoon of the streets they pass through or not: I hardly think they do. The mud has thinned, after a rain, in the interminable trenches which they form over the horse-car tracks in the middle of the avenues, and which you can look through for miles, but the mud does not blow into your nose and mouth as the dust does, and that is, so far, a positive advantage. A negative advantage, which I have hinted, is that they hide so much of the street from sight, and keep you from seeing all its festoons and shabbiness, pitilessly open to the eye in the avenues which have only horse-car tracks in them. In fact, now that the elevated railroads are built, and the wrong they have done to persons is mainly past recall, perhaps the worst that can be said of them is that they do not serve their purpose. Of course, in plutocratic conditions, where ten men are always doing the work of one man in rivalry with each other, the passage of people to and from business is enormous, the passage of men,



"A BOUTIQUE OF ADAMS"

to get money, and the passage of women to spend it; and at the hours of the morning and the afternoon when the volume of travel is the greatest, the trains of the elevated roads offer a spectacle that is really incredible.

Every seat is taken, and every foot of space in the aisle between the seats is held, by people standing, and swaying miserably to and fro by the leather straps dangling from the roofs. Men and women are indecently crushed together, without regard for that personal dignity which we prize, but which the Americans seem to know nothing of and care nothing for. The multitude overflows from the car, at either end, and the passengers are as tightly wedged on the platforms without as they are within. The long trains file like snail-carts at intervals of two or three minutes, and at each station they make a stop of but a few seconds, when those who wish to slight fight their way through the struggling mass. Those who wish to assert right, their way into the car or onto the platform, where the guard stands as a man gets against the stomachs and in the faces of those arriving too late. Sometimes horrible accidents happen; a man clinging to the outside of the gate has his life crushed out of his body against the posts of the station as the train pulls out. But in this land, where people have such a dread of civic collectives of any kind, but individuality should suffer, the individual is practically nothing in the regard of the corporate collectives which abound.

It is not only the corporations which outrage personal rights, in America, where there is no question of interest, there seems to be no question of rights between individuals. They prey upon one another

and seize advantages by force and by fraud in too many ways for me to hope to make the whole situation evident to you, but I may at least give you some notion of the wrong they do. The avenues to the eastward and westward have not grown up so fully and continuously in accordance to any law of order, or in pursuance of any meditated design. They have been pushed along green lanes, in fragments, as builders saw their interest in offering buyers a house or a row of houses, or as they could plot or track the greed of land-owners clinging to their land, and courting upon some need of it, in the hope of extracting an enormous profit from it. In our place you will see a vast and lofty edifice, of brick or stone, and on each side of it or in front of it, a structure one-fourth as high, or a row of scrawny hovels, but there till a purchaser comes, not to pay the honest worth of the land for it, but to yield the price the owner wants. In other places you see long stretches of high board fences, shutting in vacant lots, usually the best lots on the street, which the landlord holds for the rise destined to accrue to him from the building all round and beyond his property. In the meantime he pays a low tax on his land compared with the tax which the improved property pays, and gets some money return for the use of his fence by the Italian fruiters who build their stalls into it, and by the bill-posters who cover it with a medley of theatrical announcements, picturing the scenes of the different plays and the persons of the players. To the Altruistic public the selfishness of a man willing fully to benefit by the industry and energy of others in giving value to his possessions would be unimaginable. Yet this is so common

here that it is accepted and honored as a proof of business sagacity, and the man who knows how to hold on to his land, until the very moment when it can enrich him most, though he has neither plowed nor sown it, or laid the foundation of a house dwelling upon it, is honored as a long-headed and solid citizen, who deserves well of his neighbors. There are many things which unite



"THE STATIONS ARE RATHER SEATS OF CONCENTRATION."



A FRAGMENTED PART OF TRINITY STREET.

to render the avenues unusually and unsightly, such as the apparently desperate tastelessness and the apparently instructive uncleanness of the New Yorkers. But as I stand at some point commanding a long stretch of one of their tiresome perspectives, which is architecturally like nothing so much as a house's parson, with the teeth broken or dislodged at intervals, I can blame nothing so much for the hideous effect as the rapacity of the land-owner holding on for a rise, as it is called. It is he who breaks the skyline, and keeps the street, seen and gone at the best in design, a defiled purpose, and a chaos come again.

Even when the owners begin to build, to improve their real estate, so the phrase is, it is without regard to the rights of their neighbors, or the feelings or tastes of the public, so far as the public may be supposed to have any. This is not true of the shabby avenues alone, but of the finest, and of all the streets. If you will look, for instance, at the enclosed photograph of the street facing the southern front of the Park, you will get some notion of what I mean, and I hope you will be willing to suffer by a little study of it. At the western end you will see a vacant lot, with its high board fence covered with painted signs, then a tall mass of apartment houses, then a stretch of ordinary New York dwellings of the old commonplace brownstone sort, then a stable, and a

wooden liquor saloon at the corner. Across the most avenue there rises for about the compact bulk of a series of apartment houses, which in color and design are the pleasantest in the city, and are so far worthy of their site. Beyond them to the eastward the buildings decline and fall, till they sink into another wooden drinking-shop on the corner of another avenue, where you will see the terminus of one of the elevated roads. Beyond this avenue is the fence of a large vacant lot, covered, as usual, with theatrical posters, and then three ranges skyward another series of apartment houses. The highest of these is nearly fifty feet higher than its nearest neighbors, which sink again, till you suddenly drop from their nondescript monotony in the Gothic facade of a house of a wholly different color, in its pale sand stone, from the red of their brick fronts.

A vacant lot grows here again, with a flare of theatrical posters on its fence, and beyond this, on the corner, is a large hotel, the most agreeable of the three that tower above the low square at the gate of the Park. With that silly American weakness for something foreign, this square is called the Plaza; I believe that it is not at all like a Spanish plaza, but the name is its least offense. An irregular space in the center is planted with trees, in whose shade the broken-brained hanks of the public carriages droop their unhappy heads, without the spirit to bite the flies that trouble these dreams, and before this you get a glimpse of the conventional cross-street terminating the Plaza. At the eastern corner of the avenue is a vacant lot, with pictorial advertisements painted on its fence, and then you come to the second of the great hotels which give the Plaza such character as it has. It is of a light-colored stone, and it towers far above the first, which is of brick. It is thirteen stories high, and it stops abruptly in a flat roof. On the next corner north is another hotel, which rises six or seven stories higher yet, and terminates in a sort of mansard, topping a romantic cliff of yellow brick and red sandstone. I seek a term for the architectural order, but it may not be the right one. There is no term for the civic disorder which succeeds. From the summit of this enormous activity there is a precipitous fall of twelve stories to the roof of the great office, which is a



"THEIR AND CONTRAST WITH AN AMERICAN."

grocery; and then to the florist's and photographer's next is another descent of three stories; on the corner is a drinking-saloon, one store in height, with a brick front and a wooden side. I will not ask you to go farther with me; the avenue continues northward and southward in a delirium of lines and colors, a savage anarchy of shapes, which I should think the general experience of the beauty of the Fair City at Chicago would now render perceptible even to the dull American sense. What events is the necessary and memorable effect of that unpoetic indelicacy which the Americans prize, and which can material itself only in form and wrong; but if you criticised it you would surprise and alarm them almost as much as if you attacked the atrocious economic irregularity of springs from.

There are other points on Fifth avenue nearly as bad as this, but not quite, and there are long stretches of it which, if dull, have at least a handsome uniformity. I have told you already that it is still upon the whole the best of the avenues, in the sense of being the abode of the

best, that is the richest people, the Americans habitually are best in this sense. Madison avenue stretches northwest (farther than the eye can reach, an interminable perspective of brownstone dwellings, as yet little invaded by business. Lexington avenue is of the same character, but of a humbler sort. On Second avenue, down town, there are large old mansions of the time when Fifth avenue was still the home of the parvenu, and at different points on each other avenues as are spared by the elevated roads, there are blocks of decent and comfortable dwellings; but for the most part they are wholly given up to shops. Of course, these reiterate with the insane wastefulness of the competitive system the same business, the same enterprise, a thousand times. The Americans have no conception of any distribution; and though nearly everything they now use is made in large establishments their wares are dispersed and sold in an infinite of small stores.

One hears a good deal about the vast importance which are gathering the retail trade into themselves, and devastating the minor commerce, but there are perhaps a score of these at most, in New York, and on the shabbier avenues and cross-streets there are at least a hundred miles of little shops, where an immense population of little dealers levy tribute on the public through the profit they live by. Until you actually see this, you can hardly conceive of such a multitude of people taken away from the labor due to all down all, and solely devoted to manufacturing the things made by people who are overworked in making them. But bad as this is, and monstrous as it is to Altruistic eyes, it is really, harmless beside a traffic which is the most pernicious on these avenues, I mean the traffic in intoxicating liquors, sold and drunk on the premises. I need not tell you that I still hold our national principles concerning the use of alcohol, but I have learned here to be lenient to its use, in a measure which you would not perhaps excuse. I perceive that as long as there is poverty there must be drunkenness, until the State interferes and sells a man only so much as he can safely drink. Yet, knowing as I do from the daily witness of the press and the courts, that drink is the source of most

of the crimes and vices which cause this people, I find the private traffic in alcohol infinitely shocking, and the spectacle of it execrable. There is scarcely a block on any of the poorer avenues which has not its liquor store, and generally there are two, whenever a street crosses them there is a saloon on at least one of the corners sometimes on two, sometimes on three, sometimes even on all four. I had one day the curiosity to count the saloons on Fifth Avenue, between the Park, and the point down town where the avenue properly ends. In a stretch of some two miles I counted seventy of them, besides the eating houses where you can buy drink with your meat, and this avenue is probably far less infected with the traffic than some others.

You may therefore safely suppose that out of the hundred miles of shops, there are ten, or fifteen, or twenty miles of saloons. They have the best places on the avenues, and on the whole they make the handsomest show.

They all have a cheerful and inviting look, and if you step within, you find them cozy, quiet, and for New York, clean. There are commonly tables set about in them, where their frequenters can take their beer or whisky at their ease, and eat the free lunch which is often given in them, in a rear room you see a billiard table. In fact,

they form the poor man's clubhouses and if he might resort to them with his family, and be in the control of the State as to the amount he should spend and drink there, I could not think them without their rightful place in an economy which saves the vital forces of the laborer with overwork, or keeps him in a fever of hope or a fever of despair, as to the chances of getting or not getting work when he has lost it. We at home, have so long passed the sad necessity to which such places administer, that we sometimes forget it, but you know how in our old competitive days, this traffic was one of the first to be taken out of private hands, and assumed by the State which continued to manage it without a profit so long

as the twin crimes of competition and drunkenness endured among us. If you suggested this to the average American, however, he would be horse-street. He would tell you that what you proposed was little better than anarchy, that in a free country you must always leave private persons free to defame men's words and habits, with drink, and make money out of their ruin, that anything else was contrary to human nature, and an invasion of the sacred rights of the individual. Here in New York, this valuable principle is so scrupulously respected, that the saloon controls the municipality, and the New Yorkers thank this is much better than for the municipality to control the saloon. It is from the saloon that these political bosses rise to power, it is in the saloon that all the election funds are planned and hoarded, and it



"LONG SIGHTEDNESS OF OUR BLOOD BORN KING BY THE SELL-MASTER."

would be infinitely comic, if it were not so pathetic, to read the solemn homilies on these shores in the journals which hold by the good old American doctrine of private trade in drink as one of the bulwarks of their constitution, and a chief defense against the advance of Altruism ideas.

Without it there would be far less poverty, than there is, but poverty, in a good old American institution, too, there would inevitably be less inequality, but inequality is as dear to the American heart as liberty itself. In New York the inequality has that effect upon the architecture which I have tried to give you some notion of, but in that it delivers its blow at every turn, and in nothing more than in the



"A BOY OF BAKED BEANS BY THE STREETSIDE."

dress of the people, high and low. New York is, on the whole, without doubt, the best-dressed community in America, or at least there is a certain number of people here more expensively and scrupulously attired than you will find anywhere else in the country. I do not say beautifully, for their dress is of the fashion which you have seen in our Egyptian museum, where we used to laugh over it together when we invited people in it, and is a modification of the fashions that prevail everywhere in plutocratic Christendom. The rich copy the fashion set for them in Paris or in London, and then the less-rich, and the still less rich, down to the poor, follow them as they can, until you arrive at the very poorest, who wear the cast-off and tailored fashions of former years, and misqu Shore in a burlesque of the dainties that never fails to shock and grieve me. They must all somehow be clothed; the climate and the custom require it; but sometimes I think their nakedness would be less offensive; and when I meet a wretched man, with his coat out at elbows, or split up the back, or broken shoes, tattered hat, and frayed trousers, or some old woman or young girl in a worn out, second-hand gown and bonnet, tattered and threadbare and feet, I think that if I were an American, as I am an Altkarian, I would uncover my head to them, and ask their forgiveness for the system that condemns some one always to such humiliation as theirs.

The Americans say such people are not

humiliated, that they do not mind it, that they are used to it, but if they ever look these people in the eye, and see the shrinking, averted glance of their shame and tortured pride, they must know that what they say is a cruel lie. At any rate, the presence of these outcasts must spoil the beauty of any dress near them, and there is always as much more pity than pleasure that the sight of the crowd in the New York streets must give more pain than pleasure. The other day on Fifth avenue, it did not console me to meet a young and lovely girl, exquisitely-dressed in the last effect of Paris, after I had just parted from a young fellow who had begged me to give him a little money, to get something to eat, for he had been looking for work a week and had got nothing. I suppose I ought to have doubted his word, he was so decently clad, but I had a present vision of him in rags, and I gave to the dreary tramp he must soon become.

Of course, this social contrast was extreme, like some of those architectural contrasts I have been noting; but it was by no means exceptional, as those were not. In fact, I do not know but I may say that it was characteristic of the place, though you might say that the prevalent American slovenliness was also characteristic of the New York street crowds; I mean the slovenliness of the men; the women, of whatever order they are, are always as much cleaner as they can be. But most American men are too busy to

look much after their dress, and when they are very well to do they care very little for it. You see few men dressed with the distinction of the better class of Londoners, and when you do meet them, they have the air of playing a part, as in fact they are: they are playing the part of men of leisure in a nation of men whose reality is constant work, whether they work for bread or whether they work for money, and when, when they are at work, outside the world, but work, when they are at leisure, into something third rate and fourth rate. The consciousness of effect in the street crowds, is not absent from Fifth avenue or from Madison avenue any more than it is from First avenue or Tenth avenue, and the tide of wealth and fashion that rolls up and down the better avenues in the splendid carriages, makes the shabbiness of the foot-passenger, when he is shabby, as he often is, the more apparent. On the far east side, and on the far west side, the horse-cars, which form the only means of transit, have got the dirt and grime of the streets and the dwellings on them and in them, and there is one tone of foulness in the passengers and the vehicles. I do not wish to speak other than tenderly of the poor, but it is useless to pretend that they are other than offensive in aspect, and I have to take my sympathy in both kinds when I try to brood it upon them. Neither they nor the quarter they live in has any palatial grandeur; and the real, starved affluence, will seek in vain to keep itself with the looks of picturesqueness in their aspect.

As I have said before, the shabby avenues have a picturesqueness of their own, but it is a repulsive picturesqueness, as I have already suggested, except at a distance. There are some differences of level, on the avenues near the river, that give them an advantage of the more central avenues, and there is now and then a break of their line by the water, which is always good. I noticed this particularly on the eastern side of the city, which is also the older part, and which has been less subject to the changes perpetually going on elsewhere, so that First avenue has really a finer sky-line, in many parts, than most parts of Fifth avenue. There are certain bits, as the artists say, in the old quarters of the town once forming Greenwich village, which, when I think of them, make

me almost wish to take back what I have said of the absence even of quaintness in New York. If I recall the aspect of Mulberry Street and Elizabeth Street, on a cold afternoon, when their Italian denizens are all either on the pavement or have their heads poked out of the windows, I am still more in doubt of my own words. But I am very at heart, that there is no kindliness in the quaintness, such as you are used to find in European cities. It has undergone the same sort of malign change here that has transformed the Italians from the friendly folk we are told they are at home, to the surly race, and even savage race they, usually show themselves here, shrewd for their advancement in the material things, which seem the only good things to the Americanized slaves of all races, and fierce for their fall share of the political postage. The Italians have a whole region of the city to themselves, and they might feel at home in it if something were done the fifth of their native environment could repel them.

As you pass through these streets, there is much to appeal to your pity in the squatted aspect of the people and the place, but nothing to take your fancy, and perhaps this is best, for I think that there is nothing more infernal than the juggle that



GREENWICH VILLAGE.



A BIT OF GREENWICH VILLAGE.

transmutes for the benighted hearted people here the misery of their fellows into something vague or poetic. Only very rarely have I got any relief from the sheer distress which the prevalent poverty gives, and perhaps you will not be able to understand how I could find this in the sight of some chickens going to roost on a row of carts drawn up by the street side, near a little hovel where some old people lived in a temporary respite from the building about them; or from a cottage in outlying suburban fields, with a tar-roofed shed for a stable; and an old horse cropping the pasture of the enclosure, with a brood of turkeys at his heels.

But in New York you come to be glad of anything that will suggest a wonder and a gentler life than that which you usually see. The life of the poor here seemed to me symbolized in a waste and ruined field that I came upon the other day in one of the westward avenues which had unimaguably once been the grounds about a pleasant home, or perhaps a public square. Till I saw this I did not think any piece of our mother earth could have been made to look so brutal and desolate amidst the habitations of men. But every

square of grass had been torn from it, the hardened and barren soil was fissured and corrugated like a beggar's face, and it was all strewn with clods and stones, as if it had been a savage battle-ground. A few trees, that seemed beaten back, stood aloof from the borders near the streets, where some courses of an ancient stone wall rose in places above the pavement. I found the sight of it actually depressing; it made me feel ruffianly, and I cursed upon it in helpless wonder as to the influence its ugliness must have had upon the structural ugliness all about it, if some wretch had turned it in hopes of respite.

But probably none ever does. Probably the people on the shabby streets and avenues are no more sensible of their hideousness than the people in the finer streets and avenues are aware of their dulness or their frantic disproportion. I have never heard a New Yorker speak of these things, and I have no doubt that if my words could come to the ears of the average cultivated New Yorker he would be honestly surprised that any one should find his city so ugly as it is. Dirty he would cheerfully allow it to be, and he would be rather proud of telling you how much New York spent every year for not having herself

cleaned; but that she was hideously and wilfully ugly he could not believe. And for that first lesson of civilization which my words imparted, a civic control of the private architecture of the place, he would shrink from it with about as much horror as from civic control of the liquor trade. If he did not, he would still be unable to understand how the individual liberty that reforms a man to build offensively to his neighbor or to the public at large, is not liberty, but is a barbarous tyranny, which puts an end instantly to beauty, and extinguishes the common and the personal rights of every one who lives near the offender or passes by his edifice. The Americans are yet



ON THE EAST SIDE.

so far lost in the dark ages as to suppose that there is freedom where the caprice of one citizen can interfere with the comfort or pleasure of the rest.

A. HENSON.

"BEND LOW AND HARK!"

By LUCAS CHARLES MONTGOMERY

Bend low and hark with me, my dear,
How the winds sigh!
A voice is on them that I know—
It brings the by-gone days so near,
Like a soul's cry.

Those whom we bury out of sight,
How still they lie!
Beyond the reaches of the light,
Outside the realm of day and night—
Do they not die?

Shall we unlock the long-closed door—
You, dear, or I?
Could love be what it was before,
If we should call them back once more,
And they reply?

Would they life's burdens claim again?
—They drove too nigh.
Oh, words be still! You shall not pain
My heart with that long-faded refrain
As you sweep by.

The dead have had their shining day—
Why should they try
To listen to the words we say,
To breathe their blight upon our May?
... Yet the winds sigh

3



LETTERS OF AN ALTRURIAN
TRAVELLER

By W. D. Howells

HOW PEOPLE LIVE IN A PLUTOCRATIC CITY.

VI

New York,
November 9, 1893.
My dear Cyril—

If I spoke with Altrurian breadth of the new New Yorkers here, I should begin by saying that the New Yorkers did not have it all. But outside of our happy country, one learns to distinguish, and to allow that there are several degrees of living all indeed hateful to us, if we know them, and yet none without some saving grace in

the plutocratic world and especially the American people, who are above all others the deplorable examples of the plutocratic ideal, without limitation by any aristocracy, the clergy, or monarchy. They are purely commercial and the thing that cannot be bought and sold, has ingeniously no place in their life. But life is not logical, outside of Altruria; we are the only people in the world, my dear Cyril, who are privileged to live reasonably, and again I say we must judge by our own aristocracy if we wish to understand the Americans, or to recognize that measure of kindness, which their warped, and starved, and perverted hearts certainly show, in spite of theory and in spite of conscience, even. I can make this clear to you, I think, by a simple instance, say that of the American who sees a case of distress and longs to relieve it. If he is rich, he can give relief with a good conscience, except for the harm that may come to his beneficiary from being helped, but if he is not rich, or not fairly rich, and especially if he has a family dependent upon him, he cannot give or anything like the measure Christ bids us give,

it. You would say that in conditions where men were conditioned against one another by the greed, and the envy, and the ambition which these conditions perpetually appeal to, there could be no grace in life, but we must remember that men have always been better than their conditions, and that otherwise they would have remained savages without the restraint or the wish to advance. Indeed, our own state is testimony, of a potential civility in all states, which we must keep in mind when we judge the people of

without wronging those dear to him, immediately or remotely. That is to say, in conditions which oblige every man to look out for himself, a man cannot be a Christian without reserve; he cannot do a generous action without self-reproach; he cannot be nobly unselfish without the fear of being a fool. You would think that this predicament must deprave, and so without doubt it does; and yet it is not wholly depraving. It often has its effect in character of a rare and pathetic sublimity; and many Americans take all the cruel risks of doing good, reckless of the evil that may befall them, and defend of the upbraidings of their own hearts. This is something that we Altruists can scarcely understand: this like the munificence of a savage who has killed a deer and shares it with his starving tribesmen, forgetful of the hungry little ones who wait his return from the chase with food, for life in plutocratic countries is still a chase, and the game is wary and sparse, as the terrible average of deaths witnesses.

Of course, I do not mean that Americans may not give at all without scruple risk, or that giving among them is always followed by a logical regret; but as I said, life with them is in serious legend. They even applaud one another for their charities, which they measure by the amount given, rather than by the love that goes with the giving. The widow's mite has little credit with them, but the rich man's million has an accolade that reverberates through their newspapers long after his gift is made. It is only the poor in America who do charity as we do by giving help where it is needed; the Americans are mostly too busy, if they are at all persons, to give anything but money; and the more money they give, the more charitable they esteem themselves. From time to time some man with twenty or thirty millions gives one of these maws, usually to a public institution of some sort, where it will have no effect with the people who are underaged for their work, or cannot get work; and then his deed is fused throughout the continent as a thing well beyond praise. Yet any one who thinks about it must know that he never earned the million he kept, or the million he gave, but made them from the labor of others somehow, that with all the wealth

left him, he cannot undo the fortune he lavishes any more than if the clock which conveyed it were a withered leaf, and not in anywise so much as an ordinary workman might feel the bestowal of a postage stamp.

But in this study of the plutocratic mind, always so fascinating to me, I am getting altogether away from what I meant to tell you. I meant to tell you not how Americans live in the spirit, however illogically, however blindly and blunderingly, but how they live in the body, and more especially how they house themselves in this city of New York. A great many of them do not house themselves at all, but that is a class which we cannot now consider, and I will speak only of those who have some sort of roof over their heads.

Formerly the New Yorker lived in one of three different ways. In private houses, or boarding-houses, or hotels; there were few restaurants or public tables outside of the hotels, and those who had lodgings, and took their meals at eating-houses were but a small proportion of the whole number. The old classification still holds in a measure, but within the last thirty years, or ever since the Civil War, when the enormous commercial expansion of the country began, several different ways of living have been opened. The first and most noticeable of these is housekeeping in flats, or apartments of three or four rooms or more, on the same floor, as in all the countries of Europe except England; though the flat is now making itself known in London, too. Before the war, the New Yorker who kept house did so in a separate house, three or four stories in height, with a street door of its own. Its pattern within was fixed by long usage, and seldom varied, without it was of brown-stone before, and brick behind, with an open space there for drying clothes, which was sometimes gardenised or planted with trees and vines. The rear of the city blocks which these houses formed was more attractive than the front, as you may still see in the vast succession of narrow, crooked cross-streets not yet invaded by poverty or business; and often the perspective of these areas is picturesque and pleasing. But with the sudden growth of the population when peace came, and through the acquaintance the houses of

American tourists had made with European fashions of living, it became easy, or at least simple, to divide the floors of many of these private dwellings into apartments, each with its own kitchen and all the apparatus of housekeeping. The apartments then had the street entrance and the stairways in common, and they had in common the cellar and the furnace for heating; they had in common the disadvantage of being badly aired and badly lighted. They were dark, cramped and uncomfortable, but they were cheaper than separate houses, and they were more homelike than boarding-houses or hotels. Large numbers of them still remain in use, and when people began to live in flats, in conformity with the law of evolution, many buildings were put up and subdivided into apartments in imitation of the old dwellings which had been changed into them.

But the apartment as the New Yorkers now mostly have it, was of the same time evolving from another direction. The poorer class of New York work-people had for a long period before the war lived, as they still live, in vast cellars, mere thought-provokingly tall, which were called tenement houses. In these a family of five or ten persons is commonly packed in two or three rooms, and even in one room, where they eat and sleep, without the amenities and often without the decencies of life, and of course without light and air. The buildings in case of fire are death-traps; but the law obliges the owners to provide some apparent means of escape, which they do in the form of iron balconies and ladders giving that festive air to their façades which I have already noted. The bare and dirty entries and stair-cases are really manifestations of the filthy streets without, and each tenement opens upon a landing as if it opened upon a public thoroughfare. The rents exacted from the tenants is sometimes a hundred per cent., and is nearly always cruelly out of proportion to the value of the houses, not to speak of the wretched shelter afforded; and when the rent is not paid the family is arrears is set with all its poor household gear upon the sidewalk, in a pitiful indifference to the season and the weather, which you could not realize without seeing it, and which is inevitable even of plutocratic

nature. Of course, individualism, which you have read so much of, is at its worst in the case of the tenement houses. But you must understand that comparatively few people in New York own the shack that shelter them. By far the greater number live, however they live, in houses owned by others, by a class who prosper and grow rich, or richer, simply by owning the shack over other men's heads. The landlords have, of course, no human relation with their tenants, and really no business relations, for all the affairs between them are transacted by agents; some have the reputation of being better than others, but they all live, or expect to live, without work, on their rents. They are very much respected for it; the rents are considered a just return from the money invested. You must try to conceive of this as an actual fact, and not merely as a statistical statement. I know it will not be easy for you; it is not easy for me, though I have it constantly before my face.

The tenement house, such as it is, is the original of the apartment house, which perpetuates some of its most characteristic features on a scale and in material undreamt of in the simple philosophy of the inventor of the tenement house. The worst of these features is the want of light and air, but so much more space, and as many more rooms are conceded as the tenant will pay for. The apartment house, however, aims to brighten that the tenement house never half reached, and is sometimes ten stories high. It is built fire-proof, very often, and it is generally equipped with an elevator, which runs night and day, and makes one level of all the floors. The cheaper sort, or those which have departed less from the tenement house original, have no elevators, but the street door is all in kept shut and locked, and is opened only by the tenant's key, or by the janitor having charge of the whole building. In the lower houses, there is a page whose sole duty it is to open and shut this door, and who is usually brass-belloned to one blinding effect of livid with the elevator boys. Where this page or hall-boy is found, the elevator carries you to the door of any apartment you seek; where he is not found, there is a bell and a speaking-tube in the lower entry, for each

apartment, and you ring up the occupant, and talk to him as many stories off as he happens to be. But people who can afford to indulge their pride will not live in this sort of apartment house, and the rents in them are much lower than in the finer sort. The finer sort are vulgarly fine for the most part, with a gaudy splendor of mosaic pavement, marble stairs, frescoed ceilings, painted walls, and cabinet wood-work. But there are many that are fine in a good taste, in the things that are common to the inmates. Their fittings for housekeeping are of all degrees of perfection, and except for the want of light and air, life in them has a high degree of gross luxury. They are heated throughout with pipes of steam or hot water, and they are sometimes lighted with both gas and electricity, which the inmate sees at will, though of course at his own cost. Outside, they are the despair of architecture, for no style has yet been invented which enables the artist to characterize them with beauty, and wherever they lift their vast bulk they deform the whole neighborhood, throwing the other buildings out of scale, and making it impossible for future artists to assimilate themselves to the intruder.

There is no end to these apartment houses for multitude, and there is no short or average fine from them. Of course the better sort are to be found on the fashionable avenues and the finer cross-streets, but others follow the course of the horse-car lines on the eastern and western avenues, and the elevated roads on the avenues which these have circled. In such places they are cheap below and apartments above, and I cannot see that the inmates seem at all sensible that they are wretchedly housed in them. People are born and married, and live and die in the midst of an uproar so frantic that you would think they would go mad of it, and I believe the physicians really attribute something of the growing prevalence of nervous disorders to the wear and tear of the nerves from the vivid rush of the trains passing almost incessantly, and the perpetual jarring of the earth and air from their swift transit. I once spent an evening in one of these apartments, which a friend had taken for a few weeks last spring (you can get them out of the season for any length of time), and as the

weather had begun to be warm, we had the windows open, and so we had the full effect of the railroad operated under them. My friend had become accustomed to it, but for me it was an affliction which I cannot give you any notion of. The trains seemed to be in the room with us, and I sat as if I had a locomotive in my lap. Their shrieks and groans burst every sentence I began, and if I had not been master of that violent speech which we use so much at home, I never should have known what my friend was saying. I cannot tell you how this brutal clamor muffled me, and made the mere exchange of thought a part of the squealed struggle which is the plutocratic conception of life. I came away after a few hours of it, bewildered and bruised, as if I had been beaten upon with hammers.

Some of the apartments on the elevated lines are very good, as such things go; they are certainly costly enough to be good; and there are inhabited by people who can afford to leave them during the hot season when the noise is at its worst; but most of them belong to people who must dwell in them summer and winter, for want of money and leisure to get out of them, and who must suffer incessantly from the noise I could not bear for a few hours. In health it is bad enough, but in sickness it must be horrible beyond all parallel. Imagine a mother with a dying child in such a place; or a wife breaking over the pillow of her husband to catch the last faint whisper of farewell, as a Harkness train of five or six cars goes roaring by the open window! What horror, what profanation!

The noise is bad everywhere in New York, but in some of the finer apartment houses on the better streets, you are as well out of it as you can be anywhere in the city. I have been a guest in these at different times, and in one of them I am such a frequent guest that I may be said to know its life intimately. In fact, my business (women transact society so exclusively in America that you seldom think of your host) in the apartment I mean to speak of, invited me to explore it one night when I dined with her, so that I might, as she said, tell my friends when I got back to Atlanta how people lived in America; and I cannot feel that I am violating her hospitality in telling you before

I get back. She is that Mrs. Makely, whom I met last summer in the mountains, and whom you thought so strange a type, but who is not altogether uncommon here. I confess that with all her faults, I like her, and I like to go to her house. She is, in fact, a very good woman, perfectly selfish by tradition as the American women must be, and wildly generous by nature, as they nearly always are; and infinitely superior to her husband in cultivation, as is commonly the case here. As he knows nothing but business, he thinks it the only thing worth knowing, and he looks down on the tastes and interests of her more intellectual life with amiable contempt, as something almost comic. She respects business, too, and as she does not despise her ignorance as you would suppose; it is at least the ignorance of a business man, who must have something in his box and her hat, or else he would not be able to make money as he does.

With your greater sense of humor, I think you would be amused if you could see his smile of pious self-satisfaction as he listens to our discussion of questions and problems which no more enter his daily life than they enter the daily life of an Eskimo; but I do not find it altogether amusing myself, and I could not well forgive it, if I did not know that he was at heart so simple and good, in spite of his conservatism. But he is sweet and kind, as the American men so often are, and he thinks his wife is the dearest creature in the world, as the American husband nearly always does. As a matter of form, he keeps me a little while with him after dinner, when she has left the table, and smokes his cigar, after wondering why we do not smoke in America; but I can see that he is impatient to get to her in their dressing-room, where we find her reading a book in the crimson light of the covered lamp, and where he presently falls silent, perfectly happy to be near her. The dressing-room is of a good size itself, and it has a room opening out of it, called the library, with a case of books in it, and Mrs. Makely's piano-forte. The place is rather too richly and dimly ragged, and there is rather more curtaining and shading of the windows than we should like, but Mrs. Makely is too well up to date, as the

world say, to have much of the hie-a-lie about which she tells me used to clutter people's houses here. There are some pretty good pictures on the walls, and a few vases and bronzes, and she says she has produced a greater effect of space by pushing the furniture, she means, having few pieces and having them as small as possible. There is a little stand with her afternoon tea-set in one corner, and there is a pretty writing-desk in the library; I remember a sofa, and some easy chairs, but not too many of them. She has a table near one of the windows, with books and papers on it. She tells me that she uses herself that the place is kept just as she wishes it, for she has rather a passion for neatness, and you never can trust women not to stand the books on their heads, or study a vulgar symmetry in the arrangements. She never allows them to there, she says, except when they are at work under her eye; and she never allows anybody there except her guests, and her husband after he has smoked. Of course her dog must be there; and one evening after her husband fell asleep in the armchair near her, the dog fell asleep on the floor at her feet, and we heard them softly breathing in unison.

She made a pretty little moaning mouth when the sound first became audible, and said that she ought really to have sent Mr. Makely out with the dog, for the dog ought to have the run every day, and she had been kept indoors; but sometimes Mr. Makely comes home from business so tired that she hated to send him out, even for the dog's sake, though he was so apt to become despondent. "They won't let you have dogs in some of the apartment houses, but I tore up the first house that had that clause in it, and I told Mr. Makely that I would rather live in a house all my days, than any flat where my dog wasn't as welcome as I was. Of course, they're rather troublesome."

The Makelys had no children, but it is seldom that the occupants of apartment houses of a good class have children, though there is no clause in the lease against them. I verified this fact from Mrs. Makely herself, by actual inquiry, for in all the times that I had gone up and down in the elevator to her apartment, I had never seen any children. She seemed at first to think I was joking, and not to

like it, but when she found that I was in earnest, she said that she did not suppose all the families living under that roof had more than four or five children among them. She said that it would be inconvenient; and I could not allege the tenement houses, where children seemed to swarm, for it is but too probable that they do not regard convenience in such places, and that neither parents nor children are more comfortable for their presence.

Comfort is the American ideal, in a certain way, and comfort is certainly what is stuffed in such an apartment as the *Mistake's* habitation. We got to talking about it, and the ease of life in such conditions, and it was then she made me that offer to show me her flat, and let me report to the *Altirians* concerning it. She is all impulse, and she asked, how would I like to see it now? and when I said I should be delighted, she spoke to her husband, and told him that she was going to show me through the flat. He consented himself promptly, and went before us, at her bidding, to turn up the electric in the passages and rooms, and then she led the way out through the dressing-room.

"This and the parlour count three, and the kitchen here is the fourth room of the eight," she said, and as she spoke she pushed open the door of a small room, bright with light, and dense with the fumes of the dinner and the disinfecting which was now going on in a closet opening out of the kitchen.

She showed me the set range, at one side, and the refrigerator in an alcove, which she said went with the flat, and "Lena," she said to the cook, "this is the *Altirian* gentleman I was telling you about, and I want him to see your kitchen. Can I take him into your room?"

The cook said, "Oh, yes, sir'am," and she gave me a good stare, while Mrs. *Mistake* went to the kitchen window, and made me observe that it let in the outside air, though the court that it opened into was so dark that one had to keep the electric going in the kitchen night and day.

"Of course, it's an expense," she said, as she closed the kitchen door after us. She added in a low, rapid tone, "You must excuse my introducing the cook. She has read all about you in the papers—you didn't know, I suppose, that there were

reporters, that day of your delightful talk in the mountains, but I had them—and she was wild, when she heard you were coming, and made me promise to let her have a sight of you somewhere. She says she wants to go and live in *Altiria*, and if you would like to take home a cook, or a servant of any kind, you wouldn't have any trouble. Now here," she ran on, without a moment's pause, while she flung open another door, "is what you won't find in every apartment house, even very good ones, and that's a back closet. Generally, there are only stairs, and they make the poor things climb the whole way up from the basement, when they come in, and all your marketing has to be brought up that way, too, sometimes they send it up on a kind of dumb-waiter, in the cheap places, and you give your orders to the maidettes down below through a speaking-tube. But here we have none of that bother, and this elevator is for the kitchen and the house-keeping part of the flat. The grocer's and the butcher's man, and anybody who has packages for you, or trunks, or that sort of thing, use it, and, of course, it's for the servants, and they appreciate not having to walk up, as much as anybody."

"Oh, yes," I said, and she shut the elevator door, and opened another a little beyond it.

"This is our guest-chamber," she continued, as she ushered me into a very pretty room, charmingly furnished. "It isn't very light by day, for it opens on a court, like the kitchen and the servants' room here," and with that she whipped out of the guest-chamber and into another doorway, across the corridor. This room was very small narrow, but there were two small beds in it, very neat and clean, with some hangings that were in keeping, and a good carpet under foot. Mrs. *Mistake* was clearly proud of it, and expected me to applaud it; but I waited for her to speak, which upon the whole she probably liked as well.

"I only keep two servants, because in a flat there isn't really room for more, and I put out the wash and get in cleaning-women when it's needed. I like to use my servants well, because it pays, and I hate to see anybody imposed upon. Some people put in a double-decker, as

they call it, a boat-stow with two tiers, like the berths on a ship, but I think that's a shame, and I give them two regular beds, even if it does crowd them a little more, and the beds have to be rather narrow. This room has outside air from the coast, and though it's always dark, it's very pleasant, as you see." I did not say that I did not see, and this sufficed for Mrs. Makely.

"Now," she said, "I'll show you our rooms" and she led down the corridor toward two doors that stood open side by side, and dashed into them before her husband was already in the first she entered, smiling in supreme content with his wife, his belongings and himself.

"This is a southern exposure, and it has a perfect gush of sea from morning till night. Some of the flats have the kitchen at the end, and that's stupid; you can have a kitchen in any sort of hole, for you can keep on the electricity, and with them the air is perfectly good. As soon as I saw these chambers, and found out that they would let you keep a dog, I told Mr. Makely to sign the lease instantly, and I would see to the rest."

She looked at me, and I pointed to the room and its dainty tastefulness to her heart's content, so that she said: "Well, it's some satisfaction to show you anything, Mr. Henson, you are so appreciative. I'm sure you'll give a good account of us to the *Albionians*. Well, now we'll go back to the par-drawing room. This is the end of the story."

"Well," said her husband, with a wink at me, "I thought it was to be continued in our next," and he walked toward the door that opened from his wife's house into the room adjoining.

"Why, you poor old fellow!" she shouted. "I forget all about your room," and she dashed into it before us and began to show it off. It was equipped with every bachelor luxury, and with every appliance for health and comfort. "And here," she said, "he can smoke, or anything, as long as he keeps the door shut."

Oh, good gracious! I forgot the bath-room, and they both united in showing me this, with its tiled floor and walls and its porcelain tub; and then Mrs. Makely flew up the corridor before us. "Put out the electricity, Dick!" she called back over her shoulder.

When we were again seated in the drawing room, which she had been so near calling a parlor, she continued to babble over with delight in herself and her apartment. "Now, isn't it about perfect?" she urged, and I had to own that it was indeed very convenient and very charming, and in theapture of the moment, she invited me to criticize it.

"I see very little to criticize," I said, "from your point of view; but I hope you won't think it indecorous if I ask a few questions."

She laughed. "Ask anything! Mr. Henson! I hope I got hardened to your questions on the mountains."

"Nice and you need to get off some pretty tough ones," said her husband, helpless to take his eyes from her, although he spoke to me.

"It is about your servants?" I began.

"Oh, of course! Perfectly characteristic! Go on!"

"You told me that they had no natural light either in the kitchen or their bedroom. Do they never see the light of day?"

The lady laughed heartily. "The water-clo is in the front of the house, and has every window at her work, and they both have an afternoon off once a week. Some people only let them go once a fortnight; but I think they are human beings as well as we are, and I let them go every week."

"But, except for that afternoon once a week, your cook lives in electric light perpetually?"

"Electric light is very healthy, and it doesn't heat the air," the lady triumphed. "I can assure you that she thinks she's very, well off, and so she is." I felt a little temper in her voice, and I was silent, until she asked me, rather stiffly: "Is there any other inquiry you would like to make?"

"Yes," I said, "but I do not think you would like it."

"Now, I assure you, Mr. Henson, you were never more mistaken in your life. I perfectly delight in your subject. I know that the *Albionians* don't think as we do about some things, and I don't expect it. What is it you would like to ask?"

"Well, why should you employ your servants to go down on a different elevator from yourselves?"

"Why, good gracious!" asked the lady. "Aren't they different from us in every way? To be sure they dress up in their ridiculous best when they go out, but you couldn't expect us to let them use the front elevator? I don't want to go up and down with my own cook, and I certainly don't with my neighbor's cook!"

"Yes, I suppose you would feel that an infringement of your social dignity. But if you found yourself beside a cook in a horse-car or other public conveyance, you would not feel personally affronted?"

"No, that is a very different thing. That is something we cannot control. But, thank goodness, we can control our elevator, and if I were in a house where I had to ride up and down with the servants, I would no more stay in it than I would in one where I couldn't keep a dog. I should consider it a perfect outrage. I cannot understand you, Mr. Horace! You are a gentleman, and you must have the traditions of a gentleman, and yet you ask me such a thing as that!"

I saw a cool in her husband's eye which I took for a hint not to press the matter, and so I thought I had better say, "It is only that in Altruria we hold servants in peculiar honor!"

"Well," said the lady scornfully, "if you wish and get your servants from an intelligence office, and had to look up their references, you wouldn't hold them in very much honor. I tell you they look out for their own interests as shrewdly as we do for ours, and it's nothing between us but a question of—"

"Integrity," suggested her husband.

"Yes," she assented, as if this clinched the matter.

"That's what I'm always telling you, Dolly, and yet you will try to make them your friends, as soon as you get them into your house. You want them to love you, and you know that sentiment hasn't got any thing to do with it."

"Well, I can't help it, Dick. I can't live with a person without trying to like them, and wanting them to like me. And then, when the unpleasant things are sunny, or leave me in the lurch as they do half the time, it almost breaks my heart. But I'm thankful to say that in these hard times they won't be apt to leave a good place without a good reason."

"Are there many seeking employment?" I asked this because I thought that it was safe ground.

"Well, they just stand around in the offices as *flâtes*!" said the lady. "And the Americans are trying to get places as well as the foreigners. But I won't have Americans. They are too uppish, and they are never half as well trained as the Swedes or the Irish. They still expect to be treated as one of the family. I suppose," she continued, with a lingering note in her voice, "that in Altruria, you do treat them as one of the family?"

"We have no servants, in the American sense," I answered as indifferently as I could.

Mrs. Makely inadvertently returned to the question that had first provoked her indignation. "And I should like to know how much worse it is to have a back elevator for the servants than it is to have the basement door for the servants, as you always do when you live in a separate house?"

"I should think it was no worse," I admitted, and I thought this a good chance to turn the talk from the dangerous channel it had taken. "I wish, Mrs. Makely, you would tell me something about the way people live in separate houses in New York."

She was instantly puffed. "Why, I should be delighted. I only wish my friend Mrs. Daffington Strange was back from Europe, and I could show you a model house. I mean to take you there, as soon as she gets home. She's a kind of Altrurian herself, you know. She was my dearest friend at school, and it almost broke my heart when she married Mr. Strange, so much older, and her inferior every way. But she's got her money now, and O, the good she does do with it! I know you'll like each other, Mr. Horace. I do wish Mrs. was at home!"

I said that I should be very glad to meet an American Altrurian, but that now I wished she would tell me about the normal New York house, and what was its animating principle, beginning with the basement door.

She laughed and said, "Why it's just like any other house!"

A. HOWES.



LETTERS OF AN ALTRUISTIC TRAVELLER.

H. W. H. H. H.

H. W. H. H. H.

PLATONIC HOUSEKEEPING.

VII.

New York, November 23, 1843.

I CAN never meet enough, my dear Cyril, upon the illegality of American life. You know what the platonic principle is, and what the platonic civilization should logically be. But the platonic civilization is much better than it should logically be, had as it is, for the personal opinion constantly modifies it, and renders it far less dreadful than you would reasonably expect. That is, the possibilities of goodness implanted in the human heart by the Creator fulfil the platonic man to be what the platonic science of life implies. He is often merciful, kindly and generous, as I have told you already in spite of conditions absolutely agonizing. You would think that the Americans would be shocked in view of the fact that their morality is often in contradiction of their economic principles, but apparently they are not so, and I believe that for the most part they are not aware of the fact. Nevertheless, the fact is there, and you must keep it in mind, if you would connect it with reality. You can in no other way account

for the contradictions which you will find in my experience among them; and these are often so bewildering, that I have to take myself in hand, from time to time, and ask myself what mind would have I fallen into, and whether, after all, it is not a ridiculous nightmare. I am not sure, that when I return, and we talk these things over together, I shall be able to overcome your doubts of my honesty, and I think that when I no longer have them before my eyes, I shall begin to doubt my own memory. But for the present, I can only set down what I at least seem to see, and trust you to accept it, if you cannot understand it.

Perhaps I can aid you by suggesting that, logically, the Americans should be what the Altruists are, since their policy embodies our belief that all men are born equal, with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; but that illogically they are what the Europeans are, since they still cling to the economical abuse of Europe and hold that men are born socially unequal, and deny them the liberty and happiness which can come from equality alone. It is in their public life and civic life that Altruism prevails;

it is in their social and domestic life that Europe prevails, and here I think is the severest penalty they must pay, for excluding women from political offices; for women are at once the best and the worst Americans—the best because their hearts are the purest, the worst because their heads are the stiffest. “Another contradiction!” you will say, and I cannot deny it, for with all their cultivation the American women have no real intellectual interests, but only intellectual fads; and while they certainly think a great deal, they reflect little, or not at all. The inventions and improvements which have made their household work easy, the wealth that has released them in such vast numbers from work altogether, has not enlarged them to the sphere of duties which our African women share with us, but has left them, with their quickened intelligences, the prey of the frivolities which engross the European women, and which have ruined the life of the men both in every

country where women have an economical and social freedom without the political freedom that can alone give it dignity and import. They have a great deal of beauty, and they are incessantly charming; I need not tell you that they are romantic and heroic, or that they would go to the stake for a principle, if they could find one, as willingly as any martyr of the past; but they have not much more perspective than children, and their reading and their talking about their reading, seems not to have broadened their mental horizons beyond the old mantelpiece and the old sunset of the kitchen and the parlor.

In fact, the American house as it is, the American household, is what the American woman makes it, and with it to be, whether she wishes it to be so or not, for I often find that the American woman will things that she in no wise wishes. What the normal New York house is, however, I had great difficulty in getting Mrs.



House of a Gentleman, New York



A MAN OF FINE TASTE AND TASTE.

Shown by Mignard's Cook.

blakely to tell me, for, as she said quite frankly, she could not imagine my not knowing. She asked me if I really wanted her to begin at the beginning, and when I said that I did, she took a little more time to laugh at the idea, and then she said: "I suppose you mean a brown-stone, four-story house on the middle of a block?"

"Yes, I think that is what I mean," I said.

"Well," she began, "these high steps that they all have, unless they're English basement-houses, really gives them another story, for people used to dine in the front room of their basements. You've noticed the little front yard, about as big as a handkerchief, generally, and the steps leading down to the iron gate, which is kept locked, and the basement door inside the gate? Well, that's what you might call the back-elevator of a house, for it serves the same purpose: the supplies are brought in there, and marketmen go in and out, and the ashes, and the coal, and the servants—that you object to so much. We have no alleys in New York, the blocks are so narrow, north and south; and, of course, we have no back doors, so we have to put the garbage out on the sidewalk; and it's nasty enough, goodness knows. Underneath the sidewalk, there are bins where people keep their coal and kindling. You've noticed the gratings in the pavements?"

I said yes, and I was ashamed to own that at first I had thought them some sort of registers for tempering the cold in winter; this would have appeared ridiculous in the last degree to my hostess, for the Americans have as yet no conception of publicly modifying the climate, as we do.

"Back of what used to be the dining-room, and what is now used for a laundry, generally, is the kitchen, with closets between, of course, and then the back yard, which some people make very pleasant with shrubs and vines; the kitchen is usually dark and close, and the girls can get a breath of fresh air in the yard; I like to see them; but generally it's taken up with clothes lines, for people in houses nearly all have their washing done at home. Over the kitchen is the dining-room, which takes up the whole of the first floor, with the pantry, and it almost always has a bay-window out of it; of course, that over-

hangs the kitchen, and darkens it a little more, but it makes the dining-room so pleasant. I tell my husband that I would be almost willing to live in a house again, just on account of the dining-room bay-window. I had it full of flowers in pots, for the southern sun came in; and then the yard was so near the dog; you didn't have to take him out for exercise, yourself; he chased the cats there and got plenty of it. I must say that the cats on the back fence, were adroit back at night; to be sure, we have them here, too, it's seven stories down, but you do hear them, along in the spring. The parlor, or drawing room, is usually rather long, and runs from the dining-room to the front of the house, though where the house is very deep, they have a sort of middle-room, or back-parlor. Dick, get some paper and draw it! Wouldn't you like to see a plan of the floor?"

I said that I would, and she bade her husband make it like their old house in West Thirty-third. We all looked at it together.

"This is the front door," Mrs. Makely explained, "where people come in, and then begins the masonry of a house: stairs! They mostly go up straight, but sometimes they have them curve a little, and in the new houses the architects have all sorts of little dodges for squaring them and putting landings. Then on the second floor—draw it, Dick!—you have two nice large chambers, with plenty of light and air, before and behind. I do mean the light and air so a flat, there's no drying it."

"You'll go back to a house-plot, Dolly," said her husband.

"Never!" she almost shrieked, and he winked at me, as if it were the best joke in the world. "Never, as long as houses have stairs!"

"Put you in an elevator," he suggested.

"Well, that is what Elizabeth Strange has, and she lets the servants use it, too," said Mrs. Makely and, with a look at me: "I suppose that would please you, Mr. Hanson. Well, there's a nice side-room over the front door here, and a bathroom at the rear. Then you have more stairs, and large chambers, and two side-rooms. That makes plenty of chambers for a small family. I used to give two of the third-story rooms to my two girls. I ought really to

have made them sleep in one. It seemed such a shame to let the cook have a whole large room to herself, but I had nothing else to do with it, and she did take such comfort in it, poor old thing. You see, the rooms came wrong in our house, for it faced north, and I had to give the girls sunny rooms, or else give them front rooms, so that it was as bad as it was long. I declare, I was perplexed about it the whole time we lived there, it seemed so perfectly anomalous."

"And what is an English basement-house like?" I ventured to ask, on interruption of the retrospective melancholy she had fallen into.

"Oh, were live in an English basement-house, if you value your spine!" cried the lady. "An English basement-house is nothing but stairs. In the first place, it's only one room wide, and it's a story higher than a high-stoop house. It's one room forward and one back, the whole way up; and in an English basement it's always up, and never down. If I had my way, there wouldn't one stone be left upon another in the English basements in New York."

I have suffered Mrs. Makely to be nearly as explicit to you as she was to me; for the kind of house she described is of the form continually prevailing in all American cities, and you can form some idea from it how city people live here. I

ought perhaps to tell you that such a house is fitted with every housekeeping convenience, and that there is hot and cold water throughout, and gas everywhere. It has fireplaces in all the rooms, where fires are often kept burning for pleasure, but it is really heated from a furnace in the basement, through large pipes carried to the different stories, and opening into them by some such registers as we use. The separate houses sometimes have steam heating, but not often. They each have their drainage into the sewer of the street, and this is trapped and trapped again, as in the houses of our old plutocratic cities, to keep the poison of the sewer from getting into the houses.

You will be curious to know something concerning the cost of living in such a house, and you may be sure that I did not fail to question Mrs. Makely on this point. She was at once very volubly communicative; she told me all she knew, and, as her husband said, "a great deal more."

"Why, of course," she began, "you can spend all you have in New York, if you like, and people do spend between every year. But I suppose you mean the average cost of living in a basement house, in a good block, that costs for \$1000 or \$2000 a year, with a family of three or four children, and two servants. Well, what should you say, Dick?"

"Ten or twelve thousand a year," answered her husband.

"Yes, fully that," she answered, with an effect of disappointment in his figures. "We had just ourselves, and we never spent less than seven, and we didn't dress, and we didn't entertain, either, to speak of. But you have to live on a certain scale, and generally you live up to your income."

"Quite," said Mr. Makely.

"I don't know what makes it cost



Drawn by *Harold Cline*

"WITH THANKS TO THE A. B. C. COMPANY, NEW YORK."

as. Provisions are cheap enough, and they say people live in as good style for a third less in London. There used to be a superstition that you could live for less in a flat, and they always talk to you about the cost of a furnace, and a man to tend it, and keep the snow shoveled off your sidewalk, but that is all stuff. Five hundred dollars will make up the whole difference, and more. You pay quite as much rent for a decent flat, and then you don't get half the room. No, if it wasn't for the stairs, I wouldn't live in a flat for an instant. But that makes all the difference."

"And the young people," I asked; "those who are just starting in life, how do they manage? Say when the husband has *five or six or seven* a year?"

"Poor things!" she returned. "I don't know how they manage. They board, till they get distracted, or they dry up, and blow away; or the wife has a little money, too; and they take a small flat, and ruin themselves. Of course, they want to live nicely, and like other people."

"But if they didn't?"

"Why, then they could live delightfully. My husband says he often wishes he was a master-mechanic in New York, with a thousand a year, and a flat for twelve dollars a month: he would have the best time in the world."

Her husband nodded his acquiescence. "Fighting-cock wouldn't be in it," he said. "Trouble is, we all want to do the best thing."

"But you can't all do it," I ventured, "and from what I see of simple, out-of-the-way neighborhoods in my walks, you don't all try."

"Why, no," he said. "Some of us were talking about that the other night at the club, and one of the fellows was saying that he believed there was as much old-fashioned, quiet, almost controlled life in New York, among the great mass of the people, as you'd find in any city in the world. Said you met old codgers that took care of their own horses, just as you would in a town of five thousand inhabitants."

"Yes, that's all very well," said his wife. "But they wouldn't be nice people. Nice people want to live nicely. And as they live beyond their means, or

else they scrimp and suffer. I don't know which is worst."

"But there is no obligation to do either?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, there is," she returned. "If you've been here in a certain way, and brought up in a certain way, you can't get out of it. You simply can't. You have got to keep in it till you drop. Or a woman has."

"That means the woman's husband, too," said Mr. Minsky, with his wink for me. "Always do together."

In fact, there is the same competition in the social world as in the business world; and it is the ambition of every American to live in *some* such house as the New York house, and as soon as a village begins to grow into a town, such houses are built. Still, the immensely greater number of the Americans necessarily live so simply and cheaply, that such a house would be almost as strange to them as to an Alsatian. But while we should regard its furnishings as vulgar and unwholesome, most Americans would admire and covet its rich rugs or carpets, its papered walls, and thickly curtained windows, and all its foolish ornamentation, and most American women would long to have a house like the ordinary high-stoop New York house, that they might break their backs over its stairs, and become invalids, and have servants about them to harass them and hate them.

Of course, I put it too strongly, for there is often, illogically, a great deal of love between the American women and their domestic, though why there should be any at all I cannot explain, except by reference to that mysterious personal equation which modifies all stations here. You will have made your reflection that the servants, as they are cruelly called, (I have heard them called so in their hearing, and wondered they did not fly back and nail at the throat that uttered the insult), form really no part of the house, but are aliens in the household and the family life. In spite of this fact, much kindness grows up between them and the family, and they do not always slight the work that I cannot understand their ever having any heart in. Often they do slight it, and they insist unreasonably upon the society privileges which

their mistresses seem to think a man-stress invasion of their own rights. The habit of oppression grows upon the oppressor, and you would find underburdened women here, gentle friends, devoted wives, loving mothers, who would be willing that their domestics should wear an apron, work in and work out, and, where they are confined in the ridiculous American flat, never see the light of day. In fact, though the Americans do not know it, and would be shocked to be told it, their servants are really slaves, who are none the less slaves, because they cannot be beaten, or bought and sold except by the week or month, and for the price which they fix themselves, and themselves receive in the form of wages. They are social outlaws, so far as the society of the family they serve is concerned, and they are restricted to the visits they receive and pay among themselves. They are given the worst rooms in the house, and they are fed with the food that they have prepared, only when it comes cold from the family table; in the wealthier houses, where many of them are kept, they are supplied a coarser and cheaper victuals brought and cooked for them apart from that provided for the family. They are subject at all hours, from six in the morning till any time of night, to the pleasure or caprice of the master or mistress. In fine, every circumstance of their life is an affront to their pride, to that just self-respect which even Americans allow is the right of every human being. With the rich, they are said to be sometimes indolent, dishonest, mendacious, and all that Plutarch was explained that slaves must be; but in the middle-class families they are mostly faithful, diligent, and reliable to a degree that would put to shame most business men who hold positions of trust in the plutocracy, and would leave many India women they relieve of work without ground for comparison.

After Mrs. Mikely had told me about the New York house, we began to talk of the domestic service, and I ventured to hint some of the things that I have so plainly said to you. She faintly assented to my whole view of the matter, for if she wished to make an effort or gain a point, she has a magnanimity that stops at nothing short of self-devotion. "I know it," she said. "You are perfectly

right; but here we are, and what are we to do? What do you do in Africa, I should like to know?"

I said that in Africa we all worked, and that personal service was as honored among us as medical attendance in America; I did not know what other comparison to make; but that any one in health would think it as unwholesome and as immoral to let another serve him as to let a doctor physic him. At this Mrs. Mikely and her husband laughed so that I found myself unable to go on for some moments, till Mrs. Mikely, with a final shriek, shouted to him, "Dash, do stop, or I shall die! Excuse me, Mr. Brown, but you are so deliciously funny, and I know you're just joking. You won't mind my laughing. Do go on!"

I tried to give her some notion as to how we manage, in our common life, which we have simplified so much beyond anything that the barbarous people dream of; and she gave a little nodder as I went on, and seemed at least to believe that, as her husband said, I was not stuffing them; but she ended, as they always do here, by saying that it might be all very well in Africa, but it would never do in America, and that it was contrary to human nature to have so many things done in common. "Now, I'll tell you," she said. "After we broke up housekeeping in Thirtieth street, we stored our furniture—"

"Hush me!" I said. "How stored?"

"Oh, I dare say you never store your furniture in Africa. But here we have hundreds of storerooms of all sorts and sizes, packed with furniture that people put into them when they go to Europe, or get sick to death of servants—and the whole bother of housekeeping; and that's what we did; and, then, as my husband says, we borrowed about half a year or two. First, we tried hoteling it, and we took a hotel apartment furnished, and dined at the hotel table, until I certainly thought I should go off. I got so tired of it. Then, we hired a wife in one of the family hotels that there are so many of, and got out enough of our things to furnish it, and had our meals in our rooms; they let you do that for the same price, often they are glad to have you, for the dining-room is so packed. But everything got so tiring just the same as everything else, and my husband had the dyspepsia so bad he

couldn't half attend to business, and I suffered from indigestion myself, cooped up in a few small rooms, that way; and the dog almost died; and finally, we gave that up, and took an apartment, and got out our things—the storage cost as much as the rent of a small house—and put them into it, and had a corner seat in the meals, as they do in Europe. But it isn't the same here as it is in Europe, and we got so sick of it in a month that I thought I should scream when I saw the same old dishes coming on the table, day after day.

dance. If they don't like it, neither do I, and so I fancy it's about as broad as it's long." I have found that is a favorite phrase of Mrs. Makely's, and that it seems to give her a great deal of comfort.

"And you don't feel that there's any harm in it?" I ventured to ask.

"Harm in it?" she repeated. "Why, aren't the poor things glad to get the work? What would they do without it?"

"From what I see of your conditions I should be afraid that they would starve," I said.

"Yes, they can't all get places in shops or restaurants, and they have to do something, or starve, as you say," she said, and she seemed to think what I had said was a concession to her position.

"But if it were your own case?" I suggested. "If you had no alternatives but starvation and domestic service, you would think there was harm in it, even although you were glad to take a servant's place?"

I saw her flush, and she answered laughingly. "You must excuse me if I refuse to imagine myself taking a servant's place, even for the sake of argument."

"And you are quite right," I said.

"Your American instinct is too strong to break even in imagination the indignities which even daily, hourly and momentously inflicted upon servants in your system."

To my great astonishment she seemed delighted by this conclusion. "Yes," she said, and she smiled radiantly, "and now you understand how it is that American girls won't go out to service, though the



Drawn by Raymond Cox

THE SERVANT QUESTION.

We had to keep one servant—excuse me, Mr. Holmes, *domestic*—anyway, to look after the table and the parlor and chamber work, and my husband said we might as well be living for a cheap meal, and as we got in a cook; and but as it is, it's twenty million times better than anything else you can do. Servants are a plague, but you have got to have them, and so I have resigned myself to the will of Provi-

pay is so much better and they are so much better housed and fed; and everything. Besides," she added, with an evasiveness which always annoyed her husband, though I should be alarmed by it for her sake if I did not find it so characteristic of women here, who seem to be mentally characterized by the illogicality of the situation, "they're not half so good as the foreign servants, even when you can get them. They've been brought up in homes of their own, and they're uppish, and they have no idea of anything but third-rate boarding-house cooking, and they're always hoping to get married, so that, really, you have no peace of your life with them."

"And it never seems to you that the whole relation is wrong?" I asked.

"What relation?"

"That between maid and mistress, the hire and the hiring."

"Why, good gracious!" she burst out.

"Didn't Christ himself say that the labourer was worthy of his hire? And how would you get your work done, if you didn't pay for it?"

"It might be done for you, when you could not do it yourself, from affection."

"From affection?" she returned, with the deepest derision. "Well, I rather think I shall have to do it myself if I want it done from affection! But I suppose you think I ought to do it myself, as the American ladies do? I can tell you that in America it would be impossible for a lady to do her own work, and there are no intelligent offices where you can find girls that want to work for love. It's as broad as it's long."

"It's simply business," said her husband.

They were right, my dear Cyril, and I was wrong, strange as it must appear to you. The tie of service, which we think as sacred as the tie of blood, can be here only a business relation, and in these conditions service must forever be grudgingly given and grudgingly paid. There is something in it, I do not quite know what, for I can never place myself precisely in an American's place, that degrades the poor creature who serves, so that they must not only be social outcasts, but must have such a taint of dishonour on their work, that one cannot even do it for oneself without a sense of out-

rage and dignity. You might account for this in Europe, where ages of prescriptive wrong have distorted the relation out of all human wholesomeness and Christian brotherhood; but in America, where many, and perhaps most, of those who keep servants and call them so, are but a single generation from fathers who earned their bread by the sweat of their brows, and from mothers who nobly served in all household offices, it is in the last degree bewildering. I can only account for it by that bedevilment of the entire American ideal through the extension of the English economy when the English polity was rejected. But at the heart of America there is this ridiculous contradiction, and it must remain there until the whole country is transformed. There is no other hope; but I did not now urge this point, and we turned to talk of other things, related to the matters we had been discussing.

"The men," said Mrs. Walsby, "get out of the whole rather very nicely, so long as they are single, and even when they're married, they are apt to run off to the club, when there's a prolonged upland in the kitchen."

"I don't, Dolly," suggested her husband.

"No, you don't, Dick," she returned, kindly. "But there are not many like you."

He went on, with a wink at me: "I never live at the club, except in summer, when you go away to the mountains."

"Well, you know I can't very well take you with me," she said.

"Oh, I couldn't leave my business, anyway," he said, and he laughed.

I had noticed the vast and upland club-houses in the best places in the city, and I had often wondered about their use, which seemed to me a kind groping towards one aim, though only upon terms that forbade it to those who most needed it. The clubs here are not like our groups, the free associations of sympathetic people, though one is a little more literary, or commercial, or scientific, or political than another, but the entrance to each is more or less jealously guarded; there is an initiation fee, and there are annual dues, which are usually heavy enough to exclude all but the professional and business classes, though there are, of

course, successful artists and authors in them. During the past winter I visited some of the most characteristic, where I dined and supped with the members, or came alone when one of them put me down, for a fortnight or a month.

They are equipped with kitchens and cellars, and their wives and dishes are of the best. Each is, in fact, like a luxurious private house on a large scale; outwardly they are palaces, and inwardly they have every feature and function of a princely residence complete, even to a certain number of guest-chambers, where members may pass the night, or stay indefinitely, in some cases, and actually live at the club. The club, however, is known only to the cities and the larger towns, in this highly developed form; to the ordinary, simple Americans of the country, or of the country town of five or ten thousand people, a New York club would be as strange as it would be to any Altruist.

"Do many of the husbands left behind on the summer live at the clubs?" I asked.

"All that have a club, do," he said. "Usually, there's a very good tabled *bûte* dinner that you couldn't begin to get for the same price anywhere else; and there are a lot of good fellows there, and you can come pretty near forgetting that you're homeless or even that you're married."

He laughed, and his wife said: "You ought to be ashamed, Dick; and me worrying about you all the time I'm away, and wondering what the cook gives you here. Yes," she continued, addressing me, "that's the worst thing about the clubs. They make the men so comfortable that they say it's one of the principal obstacles to early marriage. The young men try to get lodgings near them, so that they can take their meals there, and they know they get much better things to eat than they could have in a house of their own at a great deal more expense, and so they simply don't think of getting married. Of course," she said with that wonderful, unintentional, or at least unconscious, frankness of hers, "I don't blame the clubs altogether. There's no use denying that girls are expensively brought up, and that a young man has to think twice before taking one of them out of the kind of home she's used to, and putting her into the kind of home he can give her. I

suppose it's as broad as it's long. If the clubs have killed early marriages, the women have created the clubs."

"Do women go back to them?" I asked, choosing this question as a safe one.

"Most!" she screamed. "They don't go at all! They *don't*! They won't *let* us! To be sure, there are some that have rooms where ladies can go with their friends who are members, and have lunch or dinner; but as for seeing the inside of the club house proper, where these great restaurants"—she indicated her husband—"are sitting up, smoking and telling stories, it isn't to be dreamed of."

Her husband laughed. "You wouldn't like the smoking, Dolly."

"Nor the stories, either, some of them," she retorted.

"Oh, the stories are always first rate," he said, and he laughed more than before.

"And they never gossip at the clubs, Mr. Human, never!" she added.

"Well, hardly ever," and his husband, with an intonation that I did not much stand. It seemed to be some sort of catch-phrase.

"All I know," said Mrs. Makely, "is that I like to have my husband belong to his club. It's nice place for him in summer; and very often in winter, when I'm dull, or going out somewhere that he hates, he can go down to his club, and smoke a cigar, and come home just about the time I get in, and it's much better than worrying through the evening with a book. He hates books, poor Dick!" She looked fondly at him, as if this were one of the greatest merits in the world. "But I must confess, I shouldn't like him to be a mere club man, like some of them."

"But how?" I asked.

"Why, belonging to five or six, or more, even; and spending their whole time at them, when they're not at home."

There was a pause, and Mr. Makely got on an air of modest worth, which he carried off with his usual wink toward me. I said, finally, "And if the ladies are not admitted to the men's clubs, why don't they have clubs of their own?"

"Oh, they have,—several, I believe. But who wants to go and meet a lot of women? You meet enough of them in society, goodness knows. You hardly meet any one

cise, especially at afternoon tea. They leave you to death."

Mrs. Makely's answer seemed to be in the direction of a prolongation of this subject, and I asked my next question a little away from it. "I wish you would tell me, Mrs. Makely, something about your way of provisioning your household. You said that the grocer's and butcher's man came up to the kitchen with your supplies—"

"Yes, and the milkman and the rooster; the butman always puts the ice into the refrigerator; it's very convenient, and quite like your own home."

"But you go out and select the things yourself, the day before, or in the morning?"

"Oh, not at all! The men come and the cook gives the order; she knows pretty well what we want on the different days, and I never meddle with it from one week's end to the other, unless we have friends. The tradespeople send us their bills at the end of the month, and that's all there is of it." Her husband gave me one of his queer looks, and she went on: "When we were younger, and just beginning housekeeping, I used to go out and order the things myself; I used even to go to the big markets, and half kill myself, trying to get things a little cheaper at one place than another, and waste more carfare, and lay up more doctor's bills than it would all come to, ten times over. I used to fret my heart, remembering the prices; but now, thank goodness, that's all over. I don't know any more what beef is a pound than my husband does; if a thing isn't good, I send it straight back, and that puts them on their toes, you know, and they have to give me the best of everything. The bills average about the same, from month to month, a little more if we have company, but, if they're too outrageous, I make a fuss with the cook, and she scolds the men, and then it goes better for a while. Still, it's a good bother."

I confess that I did not see what the bother was, but I had not the courage to ask, for I had already conceived a wholesome dread of the reputation of an American lady's nerves. So I merely suggested, "And that is the way that people usually manage?"

"Why," she said, "I suppose that

some old-fashioned people still do their marketing, and people that have to look to their outgoings, and know what every mouthful costs them. But their lives are not worth having. Evelyn Strange does it—or she did do it when she was in the country. I dare say she won't when she gets back—just from a sense of duty, and because she says that a housekeeper ought to know about her expenses. But I ask her who will ever whether she knows or not; and as for giving the money to the poor that she saves by spending economically, I tell her that the butcher and the grocer have to live, too, as well as the poor, and so it's no bread as it's long."

I could not make out whether Mr. Makely approved of his wife's philosophy or not; I do not believe he thought much about it. The money probably came easily with him, and he let it go easily, as an American likes to do. There is nothing generous or noble about this careless people, as fierce as the pursuit of riches. When these are more gamed, they seem to have no value in the man who has won them, and he has generally no object in life but to see his wozzardom speed them.

This is the season of the famous Thanksgiving, which has now become the national holiday, but has no longer any sever in it of the grim Puritanism it sprang from. It is now appointed by the president and the governors of the several States, in proclamations expressing a pious gratitude upon the people for their continued prosperity as a nation and a public acknowledgment of the divine Blessings. The blessings are supposed to be of the material sort, grouped in the popular imagination as good times, and it is hard to see what they are in these days of adversity, when hordes of men and women of every occupation are feeling the pinch of poverty in their different degrees. It is not merely those who have always the wolf at their doors, who are now suffering, but those whom the wolf never threatened before; those who amuse, as well as those who serve the rich, are shivering and fearful, whose they are not already in actual want; thousands of poor players, as well as hundreds of thousands of poor laborers, are out of employment; and the winter threatens to be one of dire misery. Yet you would not imagine from the smiling face of things, as you would see it in the

better parts of this great city, that there was a heavy heart or an empty stomach anywhere below it. In fact, people here are so used to seeing other people in want that it no longer affects them as reality, it is merely dramatic, or hardly so life-like as that; it is merely histrionic. It is rendered still more spectacular to the imaginations of the fortunate by the melodrama of charity: they are invited to take part in by endless appeals, and their fancy is flattered by the notion that they are curing the distress they see only slightly relieving by a gift from their superfluity. The charity, of course, is better than nothing, but it is a fitting mockery of the trouble at the best. If it were proposed that the city should subsidize a theater at which the idle play-ers could get employment in producing good plays at a moderate cost to the people, the notion would not be considered more ridiculous than that of funding municipal works for the different sets of idle workers, and it would not be thought half so odious, for the proposition to give work by the collectiv-

ity is supposed to be in continuation of the sacred principle of monopolistic competition so dear to the American economist, and it would be denounced as an approximation to the remainder of the city in anarchy and destruction by dynamite.

But as I have written and, the American life is in worse logical, and you will not be surprised, though you may be shocked or amused to learn that the festival of Thanksgiving is now so generally devoted to witnessing a game of foot-ball between the Elems of two great universities, that the services at the churches are very scantily attended. The Americans are practical, if they are not logical, and this preference of foot-ball to prayer and praise on Thanksgiving day has gone so far that now a principal church in the city holds its services on Thanksgiving eve, so that the worshippers may not be tempted to keep away from their favorite game.

There is always a heavy dinner at home after the game, to console the friends of those who have lost, and to heighten the joy of the winning side, among the comfortable people. The poor recognize the day largely as a sort of carnival. They go about in masquerade on the eastern avenues, and the children of the foreign races who populate that quarter, penetrate the better streets, blowing horns, and begging of the passers. They have probably no more sense of its difference from the old carnival of Catholic Europe than from the still sicker Saturnalia of pagan times. Perhaps you will say that a masquerade is no more pagan than a foot-ball game; and I confess that I have a pleasure in that innocent masquerade of the holiday on the East side. I am not more censorious of it than I am of the displays of festival cheer at the provision stores or green-groceries throughout the city at this time. They are almost as numerous as the drinking



Photo by August Lind

and more

alcoves, and thanks to them, the wasteful housekeeping is at least convenient to a high degree. The waste is inevitable with the system of separate kitchens, and it is not in provisions alone, but in labor and in time, a hundred cooks doing the work of one; but the Americans have no conception of our cooperative housekeeping, and so the folly goes on. Meantime, the provision stores add much to their effect of empty gaudy on the avenue.

The variety and harmony of colors is very great, and this morning I stood so long admiring the arrangement in one of them, that I was afraid I rendered myself a little suspicious to the policeman guarding the liquor store on the nearest corner, there seems always to be a policeman assigned to this duty. The display was on either side of the government's door, and began on one hand with a broad line of pump-

kins well out on the sidewalk. There it was built up with the soft white and cool green of carnations, and open bouqs of red and white grapes, to the window that flourished in banks of celery and rosy apples. On the other side, gray-green squashes formed the foundation, and the wall was sloped upward with the delicious salads you can find here, the dark red of beets, the yellow of carrots, and the blue of cabbages. The association of colors was very artistic, and even the line of station carriages overlaid, with each a brace of geese, or half a dozen quail in its embrace, and flanked with long sides of beef at the four ends of the line, was picturesque, though the sight of the carriage at the provision stores here would always be doubtful to an African; in the great markets it is intolerable. This sort of business is mostly in the hands of the Germans, who have a good eye for such effects as may be studied in it, but the fruitmen are nearly all Italians, and their style are charming. I always like, too, the cheeriness of the chestnut and peanut vendors of the Italians; the pleasant smile and friendly smile that rise from them suggest a simple and homelike life, which there are so many things in this great, weary, headless city to make one forget.

A. HOMER.



LETTERS OF AN ALBIONIAN TRAVELLER

By W. G. BOWEN

DUNFER, VERY INFORMALLY.

VIII.

New York, December 1, 1899

My dear Cyril:

I did not suppose that I should be writing you so soon again, but I was out for my first dinner of the season, last night, and I must try to give you my impressions of it while they are still fresh. Only the day after I posted my last letter, I received the note which I enclose.

My dear Mr. Haman:

Will you give me the pleasure of your company, at dinner, on Thanksgiving Day, at eight o'clock, very informally. My friend, Mrs. Hurlington Strang, has unexpectedly returned from Europe, within the week, and I am asking a few friends, whom I can trust to excuse this very short notice, to meet her.

With Mr. Makely's best regards,

Yours cordially,

Dorothy Makely.

The Sphinx,

November the twenty-sixth,

Eighteen hundred and

Ninety-three.

I must explain to you that it has been a fad with the ladies here to spell out their dates, and though the fashion is waning, Mrs. Makely is a woman who would remain in such an absurdity among the very last. It will let you make your own conclusions concerning her, for though, as an Albionian, I cannot respect her, I like her so much, and I have so often enjoyed her generous hospitality, that I cannot bring myself to criticize her except by the implications of the facts. She is unseasonable, but to our way of thinking, all the Americans I have met are unseasonable, and she has the merits that you would not logically attribute to her character. Of course, I cannot feel that her evident regard for me is the least of these, though I

like to think that it is more founded in reason than the rest.

I have by this time become far too well versed in the polite conventions of the plutocratic world to imagine, that because she asked me to come to her dinner, very informally, I was not to come in all the state I could put into my dress. You know what the evening dress of men is, here, from the costumes in our museum, and you can well believe that I never put on those ridiculous black trousers without a sense of their grotesqueness, that scrap of waistcoat reduced to a mere rim, so as to show the whole white breadth of the starched shirt bosom, and that coat chopped away till it seems nothing but tails and lapels. It is true that I might go out to dinner in my national costume, in fact, Mrs. Makely has often begged me to wear it, for she says the Chinese wear theirs, but I have not cared to make the sensation which I must if I wore it, my outlandish views of life, and my frank study of their ugliness are quite sufficiently among the Americans.

At the hour named, I appeared at Mrs. Makely's drawing-room in all the formality that I knew her invitation, to come very informally, really meant. I found myself the first, as I nearly always do, but I had only time for a word or two with my hostess before the others began to come. She hastily explained that as soon as she knew Mrs. Strang was in New York, she had dispatched a note telling her that I was still here, and that as she could not get settled in time to dine at home, she must come and take Thanksgiving with her. "She will have to go out with Mr. Makely, but I am going to put you next to her at table, for I want you both to have a good time. But don't you forget that you are going to take me out." I said that I should certainly not forget it, and I showed her the envelope with my name on the outside, and here on a card inside,

which the serving man at the door had given me in the hall, as the first token, after her letter, that the dinner was to be in the last degree unceremonious. She laughed, and said: "I've had the luck to pick up two or three other agreeable people that I know will be glad to meet you. Usually, it's such a scratch lot at Thanksgiving, for everybody dines at home that can, and you have to trust to the highways and the byways for your guests, if you give a dinner. But I did want to bring Mrs. Stronge and you together, and so I chanced it. Of course, it's a serious dinner, as you must have inferred from the man at the door. I've given my servants a holiday, and had Clara's people do the whole thing. It's as broad as it's long, and as my husband says, you might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb; and it serves better. Everybody will know it's sent in, so that nobody will be deceived. There'll be a turkey in it somewhere, and cranberry sauce; I've insisted on that; but it won't be a regular American Thanksgiving dinner, and I'm rather sorry, on your account, for I wanted you to see one, and I meant to have had you here, just with ourselves; but Evelyn Stronge's coming back put a new face on things, and so I've gone in for this affair, which isn't at all what you would like. That's the reason I tell you at once, it's sent in."

I am so often at a loss for the connection in Mrs. Makely's ideas that I am more patient with her incoherent jargon than you will be, I am afraid. It went on to much the effect that I have tried to report, until the moment she took the hand of the guest who came next. They arrived, until there were eight of us in all; Mrs. Stronge coming last, with excuses for being late. I had somehow figured her as a person rather mystical and reticent in appearance, perhaps on account of her name, and I had imagined her tall and superb. But she was, really, rather small, though not below the women's average, and she had a face more round than otherwise, with a sort of businesslike earnestness, but a very charming smile, and presently, as I saw, an American sense of humor. She had brown hair and gray eyes, and teeth not too regular to be monotonous; her mouth was very sweet, whether she laughed, or sat gravely silent.

She at once affected me like a person who had been sobered beyond her nature by responsibility, and had steadily strengthened under the experience of life. She was dressed with a sort of personal taste, in a rich gown of black lace, which came up to her throat; and she did not subject me to that enchantment I always feel in the presence of a lady who is much discolored, when I sit next her, or face to face with her: I cannot always look at her without a sense of taking an immediate advantage. Sometimes I find a kind of pathos in this sacrifice to fashion, as if the poor lady were wearing that sort of gown because she thought she really ought, and thus I keep my eyes fixed on hers, or avert them altogether; but there are other cases which have not this appealing quality. Yet in the very worst of the cases it would be a mistake to suppose that there was a display personally made. Even then it would be found that the gown was worn, so because the dressmaker had made it so, and, whether she had made it in this country or in Europe, that she had made it in compliance with a European custom. In fact, all the society customs of the Americans follow some European original, and usually some English original; and it is only fair to say that in this particular custom they do not go to the English extreme.

We did not go out to dinner at Mrs. Makely's by the rules of English procedure, because there are naturally no marks here, and we could not; but I am sure it will not be long before the Americans will begin playing at precedence just as they now play at the other forms of aristocratic society. For the present, however, there was nothing for us to do but to proceed, when dinner was served, in such order as suited itself, after Mr. Makely gave his arm to Mrs. Stronge, though, of course, the white shoulders of the other ladies went gleaming out before the white shoulders of Mrs. Makely above beside my black ones. I have now become so used to these observations that they no longer affect me as they once did, and as I suppose my account of them must affect you, painfully, conceivably. But I have always the sense of having a part in amateur theatricals, and I do not see how the Americans can fail to have the

same sense, for there is nothing spontaneous in them, and nothing that has grown even dramatically out of their own life.

Often when I admire the perfection of the music as before, it is with a vague feeling that I am devious in not offering it an explicit applause. In fact, this is permitted in some sort and measure, as now when we sat down at Mrs. Makely's exquisite table, and the ladies frankly congratulated her touch in it. One of them found a phrase for it at once, and pronounced it a symphony in chrysanthemums; for the color and the character of those flowers played through all the appointment of the table, and rose to a magnificent finale in the vast group in the middle of the board, infinite in their caprices of dye and design. Another lady said that it was a dream, and then Mrs. Makely said: "No, a memory," and confessed that she had studied the effect from her recollection of some tables at a chrysanthemum show held here last year, which seemed features because they were so simply and readily adapted in the charm and sapory to nearly one kind and color of the flower.

"Then," she added, "I wanted to do something very chrysanthemumy, because it seems to me the Thanksgiving flower, and belongs to Thanksgiving quite as much as holly belongs to Christmas."

Everybody applauded her intention, and we hungrily fell to upon the excellent oysters, with her warning that we had better make the most of everything in its turn, for she had confessed her dance to the brevity of the notice she had given her guests.

Just what the dinner was I will try to tell you, for I think that it will interest you to know what people here think a very simple dinner. That is, people of any degree of fashion, for the unfashionable Americans, who are innumerable in the majority, have no more than the Altruists save such a dinner as Mrs. Makely's. This sort generally sit down in a single dish of meat, with two or three vegetables, and they drink tea or coffee, or water only, with their dinner. Even when they have company, as they say, the things are all put on the table at once, and the average of Americans who have seen a dinner served in courses, after the Russian manner, inevitable in the fine

world here, is not greater than those who have seen serving men in livery. Among them the host piles up his guest's plate with meat and vegetables, and it is passed from hand to hand till it reaches him; his drink arrives from the hostess by the same means. One maid serves the table in a better class, and two maids in a class still better; it is only when you reach people of very decided form that you find a man in a black coat behind your chair; Mrs. Makely, mindful of the informality of her dinner in everything, had two men.

I should say the difference between the Altruists and the unfashionable Americans, in view of such a dinner as she gave us, would be that, while it would seem to us abominable for its extravagance, and resulting in its appeal to appetite, it would seem to most of such Americans altogether admirable and serviceable, and would appeal to their ambition to give such a dinner themselves as soon as ever they could.

Well, with our oysters, we had a delicate French wine, though I am told that formerly Spanish wines were served. A delicious soup followed the oysters, and then we had fish, with bread crumbers dressed with oil and vinegar, like a salad; and I suppose you will ask what we could possibly have eaten more. But this was only the beginning, and next there came a course of smothereds with green peas. With this the champagne began at once to flow, for Mrs. Makely was nothing if not original, and she had champagne very promptly. One of the gentlemen praised her for it, and said you could not have it too soon, and he had secretly hoped it would have begun with the oysters. Next, we had a remove, a tradition of beef, with mushrooms, fresh, and not of the canned sort which it is usually accompanied with. This fact was our hostess more compliments from the gentlemen, which could not have gratified her more if she had dressed and cooked the fish herself. She insisted upon our trying the bread triangle, for if it did come in a little by the neck and shoulders, it was still in place at a Thanksgiving dinner, because it was so American; and the stuffed peppers, which, if they were not American, were at least Mexican, and originated in the kitchen of a sister republic.

He. There were one or two other side-dishes, and with all the banquetry begun to be poured out.

Mr. Makely said that almost all came now from California, no matter what French dishes they named it after, but banquetry you could not see in. His guests were now drinking the different wines, and to reach the same effect, I should think, as if they had mixed them all in one cup, though I ought to say that several of the ladies took no wine, and kept me in countenance after the first taste that I was obliged to take of each, in order to pacify my host.

You must know that all the time there were plates of radishes, olives, celery, and roasted almonds set about that every one ate of without much reference to the courses. The talking and the laughing were at their height, but there was a little flagging of the appetite, perhaps, when it received the stimulus of a water-ice flavored with rum. After eating it, I immediately experienced an extraordinary revival of my hunger (I am ashamed to confess that I was gorging myself like the rest), but I quailed inwardly when one of the wait-waiters set down before Mr. Makely, a roast turkey that looked as large as an ostrich. It was received with cries of joy, and one of the gentlemen said, "Ah, Mrs. Makely, I was waiting to see how you would interpolate the turkey, but you never fail. I know you would get it in somewhere. But when," he added in a baroque whisper, behind his hand, "are the—"

"Carvesback duck?" she asked, and at that moment the servant set before the various guests a platter of those renowned birds, which you know something of already from the report our wait-waiters have given of their call among the Americans.

Every one laughed, and after the gentlemen had made a despairing flourish over them with a carving knife in emulation of Mr. Makely's ridiculous attempt upon the turkey, both were taken away, and served at a sideboard. They were then served in slices, the turkey with cranberry sauce, and the ducks with currant jelly, and I noticed that no one took so much of the turkey that he could not suffer himself to be helped also to the duck. I must tell you that there was a

salad with the duck, and after that there was an ice-cream, with fruit and all manner of candied fruits, and candies, different kinds of cheese, coffee, and liquor to drink after the coffee.

"Well, now," Mrs. Makely proclaimed, in high delight with her triumph. "I must let you imagine the pumpkin pie. I assert to have it, because it isn't really Thanksgiving without it. But I couldn't, for the life of me, see where it would come in."

This made them all laugh, and they began to talk about the genuine American character of the holiday, and what a fine thing it was to have something truly national. They praised Mrs. Makely for thinking of so many American dishes, and the fortune gentlemen said that she rendered no greater tribute than was due to the overruling Providence which had so abundantly bestowed them upon the Americans as a people. "You must have been glad, Mrs. Strange," he said, to the lady at my side, "to get back to our American owners. There seems nothing else so potent to bring us home from Europe."

"I'm afraid," she answered, "that I don't care so much for the American owner as I should. But I am certainly glad to get back."

"In time for the turkey, perhaps?"

"No, I care no more for the turkey than for the owner of my native land," said the lady.

"Ah, well, say the carvesback duck then. The carvesback duck is no alien. He is as thoroughly American as the turkey, or as any of us."

"No, I should not have missed him either," persisted the lady.

"What could one have missed," the gentleman said, with a bow to the hostess, "in the dinner Mrs. Makely has given us? If there had been nothing, I should not have missed it," and when the laugh at his drolling had subsided, he asked Mrs. Strange: "Then, if it is not too indiscreet, might I inquire what in the world hasured you again to our shores, if it was not the owner, nor the turkey, nor yet the carvesback?"

"The American dinner-party," said the lady, with the same baroque.

"Well," he consented, "I think I understand you. It is different from the

English dinner-party as being a festivity rather than a solemnity; though after all the American dinner is only a condition of the English dinner. Do you find us much changed, Mrs. Strange?"

"I think we are every year a little more European," said the lady. "One notices it on getting home."

"I supposed we were so European already," returned the gentleman, "that a European landing among us would think he had got back to his starting point in a sort of vicious circle. I am myself so thoroughly Europeanized in all my feelings and instincts, that do you know, Mrs. Makely, if I may confess it without offence—"

"Oh, by all means!" cried the hostess.

"When that vast bird which we have been praising, that colossal roast turkey, appeared, I felt a shudder go through my delicate substance, such as a refined Englishman might have experienced at the sight, and I said to myself, quite as if I were not one of you, 'Good heavens! now they will begin talking through their noses and eating with their knives. It's what I might have expected!'"

It was impossible not to feel that this gentleman was talking at me; if the Americans have a foreign guest, they always talk at him more or less; and I was not surprised when he said, "I think our friend, Mr. Horner, will conceive my fine avowal from the crude period of our existence which the roast turkey marks as distinctly as the griffin of the cave-dweller predates his speech."

"No," I protested, "I am afraid that I have not the documents for the interpretation of your emotion. I hope you will take pity on my ignorance, and tell me just what you mean."

The others said they none of them knew either, and would like to know, and the gentleman began by saying that he had been going over the matter in his mind on his way to dinner, and he had really been trying to lead up to it ever since we sat down. "I've been struck, first of all, by the fact, in our evolution, that we haven't socially evolved from ourselves; we've evolved from the Europeans, from the English. I don't think you'll find a single society site with us now that had its origin in our peculiar national life, if we have a peculiar national life; I doubt

it, sometimes. If you begin with the earliest thing in the day, if you begin with breakfast, as society gives breakfasts, you have an English breakfast, though American people and provisions."

"I must say, I think they're both much nicer," said Mrs. Makely.

"Ah, there I am with you! We borrow the form, but we infuse the spirit. I am talking about the form, though. Then, if you come to the society lunch, which is almost indistinguishable from the society breakfast, you have the English lunch, which is really an undistorted English dinner. The afternoon tea is English again, with its troops of sugar females and stray, reluctant males, though I believe there are rather more men at the English tea, owing to the larger leisure class in England. The afternoon tea and the "at home" are as nearly alike as the breakfast and the lunch. Then, in the course of time, we arrive at the great society function, the dinner; and what is the dinner with us but the dinner of our mother-country?"

"It is livelier," suggested Mrs. Makely, again.

"Livelier, I grant you, but I am still speaking of the form, and not of the spirit. The evening reception, which is gradually fading away, as a separate rite, with its supper and its dance, we now have as the English have it, for the people who have not been asked to dinner. The ball, which brings us round to breakfast again, is again the ball of our Anglo-Saxon kin beyond the seas. In short, from the society point of view we are in everything their mere dinings."

"Nothing of the kind!" cried Mrs. Makely. "I won't let you say such a thing! On Thanksgiving Day, too! Why, there is the Thanksgiving dinner itself! Is that isn't purely American, I should like to know what is?"

"It is purely American, but it is strictly domestic; it is not society. Nobody but some great soul like you, Mrs. Makely, would have the courage to ask any body to a Thanksgiving dinner; and even you ask only such easy-going house-friends as we are good to be. You wouldn't think of giving a dinner-party on Thanksgiving?"

"No, I certainly shouldn't. I should think it was very presuming; and you are

all as soon as you can be to have come to-day; I am not the only great need at the table. But that is neither here nor there. Thanksgiving is a purely American thing, and it's more popular than ever. A few years ago you never heard of it outside of New England."

The gentleman laughed. "You are perfectly right, Mrs. Mabely, as you always are. Thanksgiving is purely American. So is the corn-baking, so is the apple-bac, so is the sugar-party, so is the spelling-match, so is the church-sociable; but none of these have had their evolution in our society entertainments. The New Year's call was also purely American, but that is now as refined as the dodo, though I believe the other American festivities are still known in the rural districts."

"Yes," said Mrs. Mabely, "and I think it's a great shame that we can't have some of them in a refined form in society. I once went to a sugar-party up in New Hampshire, when I was a girl, and I never enjoyed myself so much in my life. I should like to make up a party to go to one somewhere in the Catskills, in March. Will you all go? It would be something to show Mr. Hemon. I should like to show him something really American before he goes home. There's nothing American left in society!"

"You forget the American woman," suggested the gentleman. "She is always American, and she is always in society."

"Yes," returned our hostess, with a thoughtful air, "you're quite right in that. One always meets more women than men in society. But it's because the men are so lazy, and so comfortable at their clubs, they won't go. They enjoy themselves well enough in society after they get there, as I tell my husband, when he grumbles over having to dress."

"Well," said the gentleman, "a great many things, the day-time things, we really can't come to, because we don't belong to the aristocratic class, as you ladies do, and we are busy down town. But I don't think we are selectest about dinner, and the young fellows are nearly always willing to go to a ball, if the supper's good, and it's a house where they don't feel obliged to dance. But what do you think, Mr. Hemon?" he asked. "How does your observation coincide with my experience?"

I answered that I hardly felt myself qualified to speak, for though I had sojourned at the different kinds of society rates he had mentioned, thanks to the generous hospitality of my friends in New York, I only knew the English functions from a very brief stay in England on my way here, and from what I had read of them in English fiction, and in the relations of our emissaries. He inquired into our amuseur system, and the company appeared greatly interested in such account of it as I could briefly give.

"Well," he said, "that would do while you kept to yourselves; but now that your country is opened to the platonic world, your public documents will be apt to come back to the countries your emissaries have visited, and make trouble. The first thing you know some of our bright reporters will get onto one of your emissaries, and interview him, and then we shall get what you think of us at first hands. By the way, have you seen any of those primitive social delights which Mrs. Mabely regrets so much?"

"I?" our hostess protested. "But, then, she perceived that he was joking, and she let me answer.

I said that I had seen them nearly all, during the past year, in New England and in the West, but they appeared to me indifferently of the simpler life of the country, and that I was not surprised they should not have found an evolution in the more artificial society of the cities.

"I see," he returned, "that you reserve your opinion of our more artificial society; but you may be sure that our reporters will get it out of you yet, before you leave us."

"Those horrid reporters!" one of the ladies involuntarily sighed.

The gentleman resumed: "In the meantime, I don't mind saying how it strikes me. I think you are quite right about the indigenous American things being adapted only to the simpler life of the country and the small towns. It is so everywhere. As soon as people become at all refined, they look down upon what is their own as something vulgar. But it is perfectly so with us. We have nothing national that is not connected with the life of work, and when we begin to live the life of pleasure, we must bor-

row from the people abroad, who have always lived the life of pleasure."

"Mr. Henson, you know," Mrs. Minkely explained for me, as if this were the aptest moment, "thinks we all ought to work. He thinks we oughtn't to have any servants."

"Oh, no, dear lady," I put in. "I don't think that of you, as you are. None of you could see more plainly than I do, that in your condition you must have servants, and that you cannot possibly work, unless poverty oblige you."

The other ladies had turned upon me with surprise and horror at Mrs. Minkely's words, but they now apparently relented, as if I had fully redeemed myself from the charge made against me. Mrs. Strange alone seemed to have found nothing mysterious in my supposed position. "Sometimes," she said, "I wish we had to work, all of us, and that we could be freed from our servile bondage to servants."

Several of the ladies admitted that it was the greatest slavery in the world, and that it would be comparative luxury to do one's own work. But they all asked, in one form or another, what were they to do, and Mrs. Strange owned that she did not know. The flirtatious gentleman asked me how the ladies did at Altruna, and when I told them, so well as I could, they were, of course, very civil about it, but I could see that they all thought it impossible, or, if not impossible then ridiculous. I did not feel bound to defend our customs, and I knew very well that each woman there was imagining herself in our condition with the cause of her photographic tradition still upon her. They could not do otherwise, any of them, and they seemed to get tired of such effort as they did make.

Mrs. Minkely rose, and the other ladies rose with her, for the Americans follow the English custom in letting the men remain at table after the women have left. But on this occasion I found it warded, by a pretty touch from the French custom, and the men, instead of merely standing up while the women filed out, gave each his arm, as far as the drawing room, to the lady he had brought in to dinner. Then we went back, and what is the pleasantest part of the dinner to most men began for us.

I must say, to the credit of the Americans, that although the eating and drinking among them appear gross enough to an Altrurian, you are not often revolted by the coarse stories which the English tell as soon as the ladies have left them.

If it is a man's dinner, or more especially a man's supper, these stories are pretty sure to follow the coffee; but when there have been women at the board, some sense of their presence seems to linger on the more delicate American nerves, and the indulgence is limited to two or three things off color, as the phrase is here, told with anxious glances at the drawing-room doors, to see if they are fast shut.

I do not remember just what brought the talk back from these primitive paths, to that question of American society forms, but presently some one said he believed the church sociable was the thing in most towns beyond the apple-bet and sugar-party stage, and thus opened the inquiry as to how far the church-still formed the social life of the people in cities. Some one suggested that in Brooklyn it formed it altogether, and then they laughed, for Brooklyn is always a joke with the New Yorkers; I do not know exactly why, except that this vast city is so largely a suburb, and that it has a great number of churches, and is comparatively cheap. Then another told of a lady who had come to New York (he admitted, twenty years ago) and was very lonely, as she had no letters, until she joined a church. This at once brought her a personal acquaintance, and she began to find herself in society; but as soon as she did so, she joined a more exclusive church where they took no notice of strangers. They all laughed at that bit of human nature, as they called it, and they philosophized the relation of women to society as a purely business relation. The talk ranged to the suitable character of society, and how people got into it, and were of it, and how it was very different from what it once was, except that with women it was always business. They spoke of certain new rich people with affected contempt, but I could see that they were each proud of knowing such millionaires as they could claim for acquaintance, though they pretended to make fun of the number of man-servants you had to run the gamut of in

their houses before you could get to your hostess.

One of my companions said he had noticed that I took little or no wine, and when I said that we seldom drink it in America, he answered that he did not think I could make that go in America, if I meant to drink much. "Drinking, you know, means overdrinking," he explained, "and if you wish to succeed, you must overdrink. I venture to say that you will pass a worse night than any of us, Mr. Henson, and that you will be sorer to-morrow than I shall." They were all smoking, and I confess that their tobacco was scarcely such an affliction to me that I was at one moment in doubt whether I should take a cigar myself, or ask leave to join the ladies.

The gentleman who had talked so much already said: "Well, I don't mind drinking so much, especially with Mabely, here, but I do object to snoring, as I have to do now and then, in the way of pleasure. Last Saturday night I sat down at eleven o'clock to blue-point oysters, corned beef, stewed terrapin—pump was very good, Mabely, I wish I had taken more of it—lamb chops with peas, redhead duck with celery macaroni, New-Orleans pudding, fruit, cheese, and coffee, with oranges, cucumbers, radishes, celery, and olives interspersed widely, and drinkables and refreshments all before me, and I can assure you that I felt very devout when I woke up after churchtime in the morning. It is this burning night into day that is killing us. We men, who have to go to business the next morning, ought to strike, and say we won't go to anything later than eight o'clock dinner."

"Ah, then the women would insist upon our making it four o'clock tea," said another.

Our host seemed to be reminded of something by the mention of the women, and he said, after a glance round at the state of the different cigars, "Shall we join the ladies?"

One of the men servants had evidently been waiting for this question. He held the door open, and we all filed into the drawing-room.

Mrs. Mabely hailed me with, "Ah, Mr. Henson, I'm so glad you've come! We poor women have been having the most dismal time!"

"Hilariously," asked the funny gentleman, "don't you always, without us?"

"Yes, but this has been worse than usual. Mrs. Strunge has been asking us how many people we supposed there were in this city, within five minutes' walk of us, who had no dinner to-day. Do you call that kind?"

"A little more than kin, and less than kind, perhaps," the gentleman suggested. "But what does she propose to do about it?"

He turned toward Mrs. Strunge, who answered, "Nothing. What does any one propose to do about it?"

"Then, why do you think about it?"

"I don't. It thinks about itself. Do you know that poem of Longfellow's, 'The Challenge'?"

"No, I never heard of it."

"Well, it begins in his sweet old way, about some Spanish king, who was lifted before a city he was besieging, and one of his knights sails out of the camp, and challenges the people of the city, the living and the dead, as traitors. Then the poet breaks off, *symples de vers*—"

'There is a greater army
That hosts are raised with arch,
A numberless swelling army,
At all the gates of life.
The poverty-stricken millions
Who challenge not when called to battle,
And inspect us all for treason,
Both the living and the dead,
And wherever I sit at the banquet
Where the feast and song are high
Amid the mirth and the merriment
I can hear that fearful cry
And hollow and haggard voices
Look into the lighted hall,
And wretched hands are extended
To clutch the crumbs that fall,
Nor within them is light and glory
And where all the sin,
And without there is cold and darkness,
And hunger and despair,
And there, in the camp of heaven
To sing and shout and rub
Glory, the great Lord of the Army,
Lies dead upon the plain.'"

"Ah," said the facetious gentleman, "that is fine! We really forget how fine Longfellow was. It is so pleasant to hear you quoting poetry, Mrs. Strunge. That sort of thing has almost gone out, and it's a pity."

A. HENSON.

LETTERS OF AN ALTRUISTIC TRAVELLER.

By W. D. Howells.

THE SELLING AND THE GIVING OF DINNERS.

IX.

New York, December 13, 1893.

My dear Cyril:

In answer to the inquiry in your last letter concerning the large shops here, I cannot say they are very attractive, and so I have told you they are not so many as we have been led to suppose. There are, perhaps fifty, at most, on Broadway and the different avenues. They are vast emporiums, sometimes occupying half a city-block, and multiplying their savings of floor space by repeated stories, one above another, reached by elevators perpetually rising and lowering the throngs of shoppers. But I do not find any principle of taste governing the arrangement of their multitudinous wares; and they have always a huddled and confused effect. I miss the pretence and human quality of individuality in them. I meet no one who seems to have a personal interest in the goods or the customers; it is a dry and cold exchange of money and wares; and the process is made the more tedious by the checks used to keep the salesman and saleswoman from robbing their employers. They take your money, but it must be sent with their written account and your purchase to a central bureau, where the account is audited and returned with your purchase, after a tedious delay. But in the system of things here, fully a fifth of the people seem employed in watching that the rest do not steal, and fully a fifth of the time is lost.

You have perhaps imagined these great stores like our Regency houses, where we go with our government orders to supply our needs, or indulge our fancies. But they are not at all like these, except in their vastness and variety. I cannot say that there is no aim at beauty in their display, but the world's notion of advertising running through it all destroys this. You are not pressed to buy, here, any more than with us, and the salesper-

ple are not allowed to misrepresent the quality of the goods, for that would be bad business; but the affair is a purely business transaction. That friendly hospitality which our houses show all corners, and that cordial endeavor to seek out and satisfy their desires are wholly unknown here. What you experience is the working of a vast, very intricate, and rather clumsy money-making machine, with yourself as a part of the mechanism.

For this reason I prefer the smaller shops where I can enter into some human relation with the merchant, if it is only for the moment. I have already tried to give you some notion of the multitude of these; and I must say now that they add much to their infinite number and variety in each effect of gaiety as the city has. They are especially attractive at night, where, under favor of the prevailing dark, the shapeless monster is able to hide something of its deformity. Then the brilliant lamps, with the shadows they cast, unite to an effect of gaiety which the day will not allow.

The great stores contribute nothing to this, however, for they all close at six o'clock in the evening. On the other hand, they do not mar such poor beauty as the place has with the multitude of signs that the major traffic renders itself so infamous with. One sign, rather simple and unostentatious, suffices for a large store; a little store will want half a dozen, and will have them painted and hung all over its facade, and stand about in front of it as obtrusively as the police will permit. The effect is bizarre and grotesque beyond expression. If one thing in the business streets makes New York more hideous than another it is the signs, with their discordant colors, their infinite variety of tasteless shapes. If by chance there is any architectural beauty in a business edifice, it is spoiled, isolated, outraged by these huckstering appendages, while the prevailing ugliness is emphasized and

heightened by them. A vast, bulking, bare brick wall, rising six or seven stories above the neighbouring buildings, you would think had enough in all conscience. Now, then, shall I give you any notion of the horror it becomes when its ugly space is blocked out in a ground of white with a sign painted on it in black letters ten feet high?

But you could not imagine the least offensive of the signs that defile American cities, where they seem trying to shout and shriek each other down, wherever one turns; they cover the fronts and sides and tops of the edifices, they deface the rocks of the mountains and the cliffs of the rivers, they stretch on long extents of freeling in the vacant suburban lands, and cover the roofs and sides of the houses. The darkness does not shield you from them, and by night the very sky is starred with the electric bulbs that spell out, on the roofs of the lofty city edifices, the frantic announcement of this or that business enterprise.

The strangest part of all this is, no one finds it offensive, or at least no one says that it is offensive. It is, indeed, a necessary phase of the economic warfare in which these people live, for the most as unconsciously as people lived in feudal cities, while the nobles bought out their private quarrels in the midst of them. No one dares relax his vigilance or his activity in the commercial strife, and in the absence of any public opinion, or any public sentiment concerning them, it seems as if the signs might eventually blind the city. That would not be so bad if worst thing could then be done to hide the signs.

Nothing seems so characteristic of this city, after its architectural sloppiness, as the eating and drinking constantly going on in it. I do not mean, now, the eating and drinking in society alone, though even the fact that some sort of repast is made the occasion of nearly every social meeting, you might well suppose that society was altogether devoted to eating and drinking, and that this phase of the drinking might altogether occupy one. But I was thinking of the restaurants and hotels, of every kind and quality, and the innumerable saloons and bars. There may not be really more of these in New York, in proportion to the population than in other

great metropolitan cities, but there are apparently more; for as this, as in all her other characteristics, New York is very open, her vices and her uses, her luxury and her misery, are in plain sight, so that no one can fail of them; and I fancy that a thinking man must suffer particularly here from the spectacle of people everywhere visible at sumptuous tables.

Many of the finest hotels, if not most of them, have their dining rooms on the level of the street, and the windows, whether curtained or uncurtained, reveal the continued row within. I confess that the effect upon some hungry passer is always so present in my imagination that I shun the places near the windows, but the Americans are so used to the perpetual encounter of famine and of profit in their civilization, that they do not seem to mind it; and one of them very logically made me observe when he convinced my reluctance, that I was not reflecting anybody's want when I chose an uncomfortable place on the dark side of the room. It was, indeed, an instance of the marvellous selfishness so frequent here. Still, I prefer either the restaurants in the basements or on the second floor, and these are without number, too, though I do not think they are so many as the others; at least they do not make so much effect. But of every sort, as I say, there is an immense variety, because New York is so largely a city of strangers, whose pleasures or affairs call them here by whole populations. Every day the trains and boats dock and carry hundreds of thousands of visitors, who must be somewhere housed and fed, and who find shelter in the hotels, and food wherever they happen to be at the moment of lunch or dinner.

But the restaurants have to cater besides to the far vaster custom of the business men who live at such a distance from their shops and offices that they never take the midday meal with their families except on Sunday. So far they are like the workmen, whom you see seated on piles of rubbish in the street, with their dinner-pails between their knees; but I need not tell you that the business men are not so simple or so sparing in the satisfaction of their hunger. I am not sure that they are always much more comfortable, and in fine weather I

think I would rather sit out doors on a heap of brick or lumber than on a brick-circled stool-top below a lunch-counter aimed a tunnel of crockery and cookery that I should in vain try to give you a sense of. These lunch-counters abound everywhere, and thousands throng them every day, watching the meat and drink pushed across the counter to them by the waiters from the semi-circle within, and then making room for others. But of late, a new kind of lunch-room has come into fashion, which I wish you could see, both for the sake of the curious spectacle it affords, and the philosophy it involves. You would find yourself in a long room, if you came with me, where you would see rows of large chairs, each with one arm made wide enough to hold a cup and saucer, and a plate. At a convenient place in the room is a counter or table, with cups for tea and coffee set out on it, and plates of pie, sandwiches, and such viands as need not be cut with a knife, and may be gathered up in the fingers. Each comer goes up to the counter, and takes from it what he likes and carries it off to some chair, where he eats his lunch in peace, and then goes back to the counter and pays for it. His word is implicitly taken as to what he has had; he goes as he came, without question; and the host finds his account in the transaction, for even if he is now and then cheated, he saves the cost of a troop of waiters by letting his guests serve themselves, and he is able for the same reason, to afford his provisions at half the price they must pay elsewhere. His experience is that he is almost never cheated, and the Altruism theory of human nature, that if you will use men fairly and trust them courageously, they will not betray you, finds practical endorsement in it.

Most of the better class of clerks and small business men frequent the cheap houses, which affect the back rooms of old-fashioned dwellings, and the basement restaurants in the cellars; a few of business buildings, down town. Some of the lofty offices which define that quarter of the city have restaurants in them on a grand scale as to price and fire, and all the appointments of the table. There are for a still better sort of lunchers or rather sort (you always are better when you mean richer in America), and

these often have lunch clubs, of difficult membership, and with names luxuriously appended, where, if they choose, people can linger over their claret and cigars as quietly as if they were in their own homes. Sometimes a whole house is fitted up with all the comforts of a club, which is frequented by its members, or the greater part of them, only for luncheon. Others, of the kind which form effectively the homes of their members, are resorted to at midday by all who do business within easy reach of them; though the breakfasting and dining goes on there, too, day in and day out, as constantly as at private houses. In fact, the chief use of the clubs is through their excellent kitchens.

There are foreign restaurants in all parts of the town,—French, German, Italian, Spanish,—where you can have your lunch served in varieties at a fixed price for the whole. The Hebrews, who are so large and so prosperous an element of the commercial body of New York, have restaurants of this sort, where they insure no peril of pork, or meat of any kind that is not kosher. Signs in Hebrew give them warrant of the fact that nothing unclean, or that has been considered unlawful by hanging from a nail, is served within, and the Christian, if he sits down at a table, is warned that he can have neither milk nor butter with his meat, since this is against their ancient and most wholesome law.

Far round on the East side, and in all the poorer quarters of the town, there are eating-houses and cook-shops of lower and lower grade, which are resorted to by those workmen who do not bring their dinners with them in pails, or who would rather take their drink and their food together. But these are seldom the older-fashioned laborers, of Irish or American descent, the frequenters of such places are Germans or Italians, or of the newer immigrations from eastern Europe, who find there some suggestions of their national dishes, and some touch of art in the cookery, no matter how common and vile the material. This, as you see it in the butcher shops and the grocery-stores of those parts, is often revolting and unwholesome enough—pieces of horse-meat carriage, and bits of decaying vegetation. It is to be supposed that the poorer restaurants supply themselves

from the superficiality of the better sort and of the hotels, but this is not always the case. In many cases, the hotels cast this into the great heap of refuse, which the garbage carts of the city dump into the vessels used to carry it out to sea, so that not even the refuse may eat of it, much less the thousands of hungry men and women and children, who never know what it is to have quite enough. But this is only one phase of the wilful waste that in manifold ways makes such woful waste in platocratic conditions. Every comfortable family in this city throws away at every meal the substance of some other family; or, if not that then, so much at least as would keep it from starvation. The predatory market is very subtle, and people who live upon each other, instead of for each other, have shamefully contrived profit within profit until it is hard to say whether many things you consume have any value in themselves at all. If they could be brought at once to the consumer they would cost infinitely little, almost nothing; but they reach him only after half a dozen sterile agencies have had their share of them, and then they are most wonderfully, most wickedly wasted in the system of such household living: its own black, noisy, unwholesome kitchen, with a cook in it chiefly skilled to spoil God's gifts.

From time to time, there is great talk in the newspapers of abolishing the middlemen, so the successive brokers are called; but there is no way of doing this, short of abolishing the whole platocratic system, for the middleman is the business man, and the business man is the cornerstone of this civilization; if, indeed, a civilization which seems poised in air by studying the trick of holding itself from the ground by the wand-hand, can be used to have any foundation whatever.

There is not so much hope of the middleman's giving as there is of the individual kitchen's, which really seems threatened, at times, by the different new ways of living which Mrs. Malady, you remember, told us of. It is, in fact, a survival of the simpler time when the housewife prepared the food of her family herself; but that time is long past, with the well-to-do Americans, and what was once the focal center of the home, has no longer any

just place in it, and only forms the great vent through which half the husband's earnings escape. Yet, if I tell them of our coöperative housekeeping, they make the answer which they seem to think serves all occasions, and say that such a system will do very well for Africa but that it is contrary to human nature, and it can never be made to work in America. They much prefer to go on waddling into the kitchen, and waddling out of it; the housewife either absolutely neglects her duty, or else she saddles herself with the care of it, and harries the poor drudge who slaves her life away in its heat and glare, and labors with all her toil, of results which we have for a trifle of the cost and suffering.

But whenever I touch one of the points of economic contrast with ourselves, I feel as if I were giving it undue importance, for I think at once of a hundred others which seem to profit as conclusively that, as yet, the life of the American, in what most nearly concerns them, is not reasoned. They are where they are because some one else had arrived there before them, and they do most of the things that they do because the English do something like them. In a wholly different climate, a climate which touches both Arctic and tropic extremes, they go on living as their ancestors lived in the equable seasons of the British Isles. They have not yet philosophized their food, or dress, or shelter, for their blating summers, and smother through them with such means of comfort as the greenest stage of the mother-country provides.

In fact, the Americans have completed their rejection of abstinence in pleasures well as in business. Eating and drinking no longer suffice in bringing people together, and the ladies say that if you want any one to come now, you must have something special to entertain your guests. You must have somebody sing, or recite, or play; I believe it has not yet come to a demand for hired dancing, as it presently will, if it does in London. Only very primitive people would now think of giving an afternoon tea without some special feature, though the at-home still flourishes, as a means of paying off the debt ladies owe one another for visits. Luncheons and dinners are given with a frequency that would imply the greatest

financial prosperity, and the gayest social living as well as unbounded leisure, and unbounded hospitality. But these must always have some reason d'être, such as we do not dream of offering, who in our simplicity think it reason enough to ask our friends to join us at least if we wish for their company. Here, apparently, no one wishes for your company personally, the individual is as completely lost in the social as he is in the economic scheme. You are treated as a factor in the problem which your hosts wish to work out, and you are invited many days in advance, and sometimes several weeks, for every one is supposed to be in great request, and it is thought to be a sort of slight to bid a guest for any entertainment under a week, so that people excuse themselves for doing it.

Our fashion of offering hospitality on the impulse, would be as strange here as offering it without some special inducement for the acceptance. The inducement is, as often as can be, a celebrity or eccentricity of some sort, or some visiting foreigner, and I suppose that I have been a good deal used myself in one quality or the other. But when the thing has been done, fully and guardedly at all points, it does not seem to have been done for pleasure, either by the host or the guest. The dinner is given in payment of another dinner; or out of ambition by people who are striving to get forward in society; or by great social figures who give regularly a certain number of dinners every season. In either case it is eaten from motives at once as impersonal and as selfish. I do not mean to say that I have not been at many dinners where I did nothing perfunctory either in host or guest, and where as sweet and gay a spirit ruled as at any of our own simple feasts. Still, I think your main impression of American hospitality would be that it was thoroughly infused with the platonic principle, and that it meant business.

I am speaking now of the hospitality of society people, who number, after all, but a few thousands out of the many millions of American people. These millions are so far from being in society, even when they are very comfortable, and on the way to great prosperity, if they are not already greatly prosperous, that if

they were suddenly confronted with the best society of the great eastern cities they would find it almost as strange as so many Altruists. A great part of them have no conception of entertaining except upon an Altruistic scale of simplicity, and they know nothing and care less for the forms that society people value themselves upon. Where they begin in the ascent of the social scale to adopt forms, it is still to wear them lightly and with an individual freedom and indifference; it is long before anxiety concerning the social law renders them vulgar.

Yet from highest to lowest, from first to last, one invariable fact characterizes them all, and it may be laid down as an axiom that in a phyllosophy the man who needs a dinner, is the man who is never asked to dine. I do not say that he is not given a dinner. He is very often given a dinner, and for the most part he is kept from starving to death, but he is not suffered to sit at meat with his host, if the person who gives him a meal can be called his host. His need of the meal stamps him with a hopeless inferiority, and eclipses him usually to the company of the wretches at their heels, and of I dare say whose norm the dogs inherit. Usually, of course, he is not physically, of such a presence as to fit him for any place in good society short of Abraham's bosom, but even if he were entirely decent, as of an inoffensive shuttleson, it would not be possible for his benefactor, to any grade of society, to ask him to his table. He is sometimes fed in the kitchen, where the people of the house feed in the kitchen themselves, he is fed at the back door.

We were talking of this the other night at the house of that lady whom Mrs. Mahedy invited me specially to meet on Thanksgiving Day. It happened there, as it often happens here, that although I was asked to meet her, I saw very little of her. It was not so bad as it sometimes is, for I have been asked to meet people, very inferiorly, and passed the whole evening with them, and yet not exchanged a word with them. Mrs. Mahedy really gave me a real treat. Strange at table, and we had some wondrous conversation, but there was a lively Mrs. creature vis à vis of me, who had a fancy of addressing me as much of her talk, that my acquaintance with Mrs. Strange rather

linguished through the dinner, and she went away so soon after the men exposed the ladies in the drawing-room, that I did not speak to her there. I was rather surprised, then, to receive a note from her a few days later, asking me to dinner; and I finally went, I am ashamed to own, more from curiosity than from any other motive. I had been, as the maid-servant, thoroughly coached concerning her, by Mrs. Makely, whom I told of my intention, and who said, quite faintly, that she wished Mrs. Strunge had asked her, too. — But Evelyn Strunge wouldn't do that," she explained, "because it would have the effect of paying me back. I'm so glad, on your account, that you're going, for I do want you to know at least one American woman that you can unreservedly approve of; I know you don't begin to approve of me; and I was so vexed that you really had no chance to talk with her that night you met her here; it seemed to me as if she ran away early, just to provoke me; and, to tell you the truth, I thought she had taken a dislike to you. I wish I could tell you just what sort of a person she is, but it would be perfectly hopeless, for you haven't got the documents, and you never could get them. I used to be at school with her, and even then she wasn't like any of the other girls. She was always so original, and did things from such a high motive, that afterwards, when we were all settled, I was perfectly thunderstruck at her marrying old Hollington Strunge, who was twice her age, and had nothing but his money: he was not related to the New York Hollingtons at all, and nobody knows how he got the name; nobody ever heard of the Strunges. In fact people said that he used to be plain Peter H. Strunge, till he married Evelyn, and she made him drop the Peter, and blossom out in the Hollingtons, so that he could seem to have a social as well as a financial history. People who disliked her insisted that they were not in the least surprised at her marrying him: that the high motive business was just her pose; and that she had simply got sick of being a teacher in a girls' school, and had jumped at the chance of getting free. But I always stuck up for her, — and I knew that she did it for the sake of her family, who were all as poor as poor, and

were dependent on her after her father went to smash in his business. She was always so high-strung and so romantic as she could be, but I don't believe that even then she would have taken Mr. Strunge, if there had been anybody else. I don't suppose any one else ever looked at her, for the young men are pretty sharp nowadays, and are not going to marry girls without a cent, when there are so many rich girls, just as charming every way: you can't expect them to. At any rate, whatever her motive was, she had her reward, for Mr. Strunge died within a year of their marriage, and she got all his money. There was no attempt to break the will, for Mr. Strunge seemed to be friendly of no family; and she's lived quietly on in the house he bought her, ever since, except when she's in Europe, and that's about two-thirds of the time. She has her mother with her, and I suppose that her sisters, and her cousins, and her aunt, come in for outdoor aid. She's always helping somebody. They say that's her pose, now; but if it is, I don't think it's a bad one; and certainly if she wanted to get married again, there would be no trouble, with her three millions. I advise you to go to her dinner, by all means, Mr. Brown. It will be something worth while, in every way, and perhaps you'll convert her to Ultramarine; she's as hopeful a subject as I know."

I was not of the number of her guests, for I cannot yet believe that people do not want me to come exactly when they say they do. I perceived, however, that one other gentleman had come before me, and I was both surprised and delighted to find that this was my acquaintance Mr. Buffon, the Boston banker. He professed as much pleasure at our meeting as I certainly felt, but after a few words he went on talking with Mrs. Strunge, while I was left to her mother, an elderly woman of quiet and even timed breeding, who affected me at once as born and bred in a wholly different environment. In fact, every American of the former generation is almost as strange to it in tradition, though not in principle, as I am; and I found myself singularly at home with this sweet lady, who seemed glad of my interest in her. I was taken from her side to be introduced to a lady, on the opposite side of the room,

who said she had been promised my acquaintance by a friend of hers, whom I had met in the mountains.—'Mr. Twelvemonth, did I remember him?' She gave a little cry while still speaking, and dramatically stretched her hand toward a gentleman who sat next at the moment, and whom I now to be no other than Mr. Twelvemonth himself. As soon as he had greeted our hostess he hastened up to me, and hardly giving himself time to press the still outstretched hand of my companion, shook mine warmly, and expressed the greatest joy at seeing me. He said that he had just got back to town, on a mission, and had not known I was here, till Mrs. Strange had asked him to meet me. There were not a great many other guests, when they all arrived, and we sat down, a party not much larger than at Mrs. Makely's.

I found that I was again to take out my hostess, but I was just next the lady with whom I had been talking; she had come without her husband, who was, apparently, of a different social taste from herself, and had an engagement of his own. There was an artist and his wife whose looks I liked, some others whom I need not specify, were there, I thought, because they had heard of Algeria, and were curious to see me. As Mr. Twelvemonth sat quite at the other end of the table, the lady on my right could easily ask me whether I liked his looks. She said, tentatively, people liked them because they felt sure when they took up one of his novels they had not got hold of a tract on political economy in disguise.

It was this complimentary class of a remark which scarcely began with praise, that made itself heard upon the table, and was echoed with a hearty sigh from the lips of another lady.

"Yes," she said, "that is what I find such a comfort in Mr. Twelvemonth's books."

"We were speaking of Mr. Twelvemonth's books," triumphed the first lady, and then several began to extol them for being fiction pure and simple, and not dealing with any questions but the loves of young people.

Mr. Twelvemonth sat looking as modest as he could under the praise, and one of the ladies said that in a novel she had lately read there was a description of a

surgical operation, that made her feel as if she had been present at a clinic. Then the author said that he had read that passage, too, and found it extremely well done. It was disgusting, but it was not art.

The painter asked, "Why was it not art?"

The author answered, "Well, if such a thing as that was art, then everything that a man chose to do is a work of imagination was art."

"Precisely," said the painter, "art *à la* choice."

"On that ground," the banker interposed, "you could say that political economy was a fit subject for art, if an artist chose to treat it."

"It would have its difficulties," the painter admitted, "but there are certain phases of political economy, dramatic moments, human moments, which might be very fitly treated as art. For instance, who would object to Mr. Twelvemonth's describing an eviction from an East side tenement-house on a cold winter night with the mother and her children huddled about the fire the father had strided with guns of the household furniture?"

"I should object very much, for one," said the lady who had objected to the account of the surgical operation. "It would be too creepy. Art should give pleasure."

"Then you think a tragedy is not art?" asked the painter.

"I think that these harrowing subjects are brought in altogether too much," said the lady. "There are enough of them in real life, without filling all the novels with them. It's terrible the number of beggars you meet on the street, this winter. Do you want to meet them in Mr. Twelvemonth's novels, too?"

"Well, it wouldn't cost me any money, there. I shouldn't have to give."

"You oughtn't to give money in real life," said the lady. "You ought to give charity tickets. If the beggars refuse them, it shows they are impostors."

"It's some comfort to know that the charities are so active," said the elderly young lady, "even if half the letters one gets do turn out to be appeals from them."

"It's very disappointing to have them do it, though," said the artist, lightly. "I thought there was a society to abolish poverty. That doesn't seem to be so ac-

tive as the charities this winter. Is it possible they've found it a failure?"

"Well," said Mr. Bullion, "perhaps they have suspended during the hard times."

They tossed the ball back and forth with a lightness the Americans have, and I could not have believed, if I had not known how hardened people become to such things here, that they were almost in the actual presence of hunger and cold. It was within five minutes' walk of their warmth and shelter; and if they had lifted the window and called, "Who goes there?" the benevolence that grows the night, could have answered them from the street below, "Deputy!"

"I had an amazing experience," Mr. Twelvemonth began, "when I was doing a little visiting for the charities in our ward, the other winter."

"For the sake of the literary material?" suggested the artist.

"Partly for the sake of the literary material, you know we have to look for our own everywhere. But we had a case of an old actor's son, who had got out of all the places he had filled, on account of circumstances, and could not go to sea, or drive a truck, or even wrap gas-baskets in paper any more."

"A sheltered employ," the banker unhesitated.

"It was not of a mercantile nature," the novelist explained. "So he came on the charities, and as I knew the theatrical profession a little, and how precarious it was with all related to it, I said that I would undertake to look after him. You know the theory is that we get work for our patients, or clients, or whatever they are, and I went to a manager whom I knew to be a good fellow, and I asked him for some sort of work. He said, Yes, send the man round, and he would give him a job copying parts for a new play he had written."

The novelist paused, and nobody laughed.

"It seems to me that your experience is instructive, rather than amusing," said the banker. "It shows that something can be done, if you try."

"Well," said Mr. Twelvemonth, "I thought that was the moral, myself, all the while came afterwards to thank me. He said that he considered himself very lucky, for the manager had told him that there were six other men had wanted that job."

Everybody laughed, now, and I looked at my hostess in a little bewilderment. She murmured, "I suppose the joke is that he had befriended one man at the expense of six others."

"Oh," I returned, "is that a joke?"

No one answered, but the lady at my right asked: "How do you manage with poverty in Altruia?"

I saw the banker fix a laughing eye on me, but I answered, "In Altruia we have no poverty."

"Ah, I know you would say that!" he cried out. "That is what he always does," he explained to the lady. "Bring up any one of our little difficulties, and ask how they get over it in Altruia, and he says they have nothing like it. It's very simple."

They all began to ask me questions, but with a courteous incredulity, which I could feel well enough, and some of my answers made them laugh, all but my hostess, who received them with a gravity that finally prevailed. But I was not disposed to go on talking of Altruia then, though they all protested a real interest, and murmured against the hardship of being cut off with so brief an account of our country as I had given them.

"Well," said the banker at last, "if there is no cure for our poverty, we might as well go on and enjoy ourselves."

"Yes," said our hostess, with a sad little smile, "we might as well enjoy ourselves."

A. HOBBS.

[To be continued in the September issue.]



LETTERS OF AN ALTHURIAN TRAVELLER.

By W. D. HOWLAND.

AN ALTHURIAN PLETHORANT.

X.

New York, December 26, 1892.

My dear Cyril:

The talk at Mrs. Strunge's table took a far wider range than my meager notes would intimate, and we sat so long that it was almost eleven before the men joined the ladies in the drawing-room. You will hardly conceive of remaining two, three, or four hours at dinner, as one often does here, in society. Out of society, the meals are dispatched with a rapidity unknown to the Althurians. Our habit of listening to the lecturers, especially at the evening repast, and then of reasoning upon what we have heard, prolongs our stay at the board; but the fondest listeners, the greatest talkers among us, would be impatient of the delay elated out here by the great number, and the slow progression of the courses served. Yet the poorest American would find his ideal realized rather in the long-drawn-out gluttony of the society dinner here, than in our temperate simplicity.

At such a dinner it is very hard to avoid a surfeit, and I have to guard myself very carefully. Just in the excitement of the talk, I gorge myself with everything, in its turn. Even at the best, my overloaded stomach often joins with my conscience in reproaching me for what you would think a shameful excess at table. Yet, wicked as my diet is, my waste is worse, and I have to drink with contrition, not only of what I have eaten, but of what I have left uneaten, in a city where so many waste and sleep in hunger.

The ladies made a show of listening, after we joined them in the drawing-room; but there were furtive glances at the clock, and presently her guests began to bid Mrs. Strunge good night. When I came up, and offered her my hand, she would not take it, but murmured, with a kind of passion:—“Don't go! I am not! Stay, and tell us about Althuria,—my mother and me!”

I was by no means left, for I must confess that all I had seen and heard of this lady interested me in her story and more. I felt at home with her, too, as with no other society woman I have met; she seemed to me not only good, but very sincere, and very good-hearted, in spite of the world she lived in. Yet I have met so many disappointments here, of the kind that our civilization wholly fails to prepare us for, that I should not have been surprised to find that Mrs. Strunge had wished me to stay, not that she might hear me talk about Althuria, but that I might hear her talk about herself. You must understand that the essential vice of a system which concentrates a human being's thoughts upon his own interests, from the first moment of responsibility, colors and qualifies every action with egotism. All egotists are monomaniacs, for otherwise they would be intolerable to themselves; but some are milder than others; and as most women have finer natures than most men, every here, and in America most women have finer minds than most men, their egotism usually takes the form of pose. This is often obvious, but in some cases it is so delicately managed that you do not suspect it, unless some other woman gives you a hint of it, and even then you cannot be sure of it, seeing the self-misdirection aimed at mortification, which the pose makes for it. If Mrs. Blakely had not suggested that some people attributed a pose to Mrs. Strunge, I should certainly never have dreamed of looking for it, and I should have been only intensely interested, when she began, as soon as I was left alone with her and her mother:

“You may not know how unusual I am in asking this favor of you, Mr. Howland; but you might as well learn from me as from others, that I am rather unusual in everything. In fact, you can report in Althuria, when you get home, that you found at least one woman in America, whom fortune had smiled upon in every

way, and she hated her suffering better or almost as much as she hated herself. "I'm quite satisfied," she went on, with a sad mockery. "that fortune is a man, and an American; when he has given you all the materials for having a good time, he believes that you must be happy, because there is nothing to hinder. If isn't that I want to be happy in the greedy way that men think we do, for then I could easily be happy. If you have a soul which is not above hiccups, hiccups are enough. But if you expect to be of real use, to help on, and to help out, you will be disappointed. I have not the faith that they say upholds you Altruists in trying to help out, if I didn't see my way out. It seems to me that my reason has some right to satisfaction, and that, if I am a woman grown, I can't be satisfied with the assurances they would give to little girls that everything is going on well. Any one can see that things are not going on well. There is more and more wickedness of every kind, not hunger of body alone, but hunger of soul. If you escape one, you suffer the other, because, if you have a soul, you must long to help not for a time, but for all time. I suppose," she asked, abruptly, "that Mrs. Makely has told you something about me?"

"Something," I admitted.

"I see," she went on, "because I don't want to have you with a statement of my case, if you know it already. Ever since I heard you were in New York, I have wished to see you, and to talk with you about Altruism; I did not suppose that there would be any chance of Mrs. Makely's, and there wasn't; and I did not suppose there would be any chance here, unless I could take courage to do what I have done, now. You must excuse it, if it seems an extraordinary proceeding to you as it really is; I wouldn't at all have you think it is queer for a lady to ask one of her guests to stay after the rest, in order, if you please, to confess herself to him. It's a crime without a name."

She laughed, not gaily, but humorously, and then went on, speaking almost with a feverish eagerness, which I find it hard to give you a sense of for the women here have an intensity quite beyond our experience of the sex at home.

"But you are a foreigner, and you come

from an order of things so utterly unlike ours, that perhaps you will be able to condone my offense. At any rate, I have risked it." She laughed again, more gaily, and recovered herself in a cheerfulness and easier mood. "Well, the long and the short of it is, that I have come to the end of my tether. I have tried, as truly as I believe any woman ever did, to do my share, with money and with work, to help make life better for those whose life is bad, and though one mustn't boast of good works, I may say that I have been pretty thorough, and if I've given up, it's because I see, in our state of things, no hope of curing the evil. It's like trying to soak up the drops of a rainstorm. You do dry a drop here and there; but the clouds are full of them, and the best thing you know, you stand, with your blotting-paper in your hand, as a puddle over your shoe-top. There is nothing but charity, and charity is a failure, except for the moment. If you think of the misery around you, and that must remain around you, forever and even as long as you live, you have your choice—to go mad, and be put into an asylum, or go mad, and devote yourself to society."

While Mrs. Strange talked on, her mother listened quietly, with a dim, unobtrusive smile, and her hands placidly crossed in her lap. She now said.

"It seems to be very different now from what it was in my time. There are certainly a great many beggars, and we need never to have one. Children grow up, and people lived and died, in large towns, without ever seeing one. I remember, when my broken-down first took me abroad, how astonished we were at the beggars. Now, I meet as many in New York, as I met in London, or in Rome. But if you don't do charity, what can you do? Christ enjoined it, and Paul said—"

"Oh, people never do the charity that Christ meant," said Mrs. Strange; "and, as things are now, how could they? Who would dream of dividing half her frocks and wraps with poor women, or selling all, and giving to the poor? That is what makes it so hopeless. We know that Christ was perfectly right and that he was perfectly sincere in what he said to the good young millionaires; but we all go away exceeding cowardly, just as the good young millionaires did. We have to,

"If we don't want to come on charity ourselves. How do you manage about that?" she asked me; and then she added, "But, of course, I forget that you have no need of charity."

"Oh, yes, we have," I returned, and I tried, once more, as I have tried so often with Americans, to explain how the necessity of giving the self continues with us, but on terms that do not involve the conscience of the giver, as self-sacrifice always must have, at its parent and root. I sought to make her conceive of our nation as a family, where every one was secured against want by the common provision, and against the degrading and degrading inequality which comes from want. The "dead-level of equality" in which all would be as the angels of God, and they blasphemously deny that He ever meant His creatures to be alike happy, because some, through a long succession of unfair advantages, have inherited more lands, or houses, or beauty, than others. I found that this gross and heinous action of God darkened even the clear intelligence of a woman like Mrs. Strangely; and indeed, it prevails here so commonly, that it is one of the first things advanced as an argument against the Altruism of America.

I believe I did, at last, succeed in showing her how charity still continues among us, but in forms that bring neither a sense of inferiority to him who takes, nor anxiety to him who gives. I said that benevolence here often assumed to involve, essentially, some such risk as a man should run if he parted with a portion of the vital air which belonged to himself and his family, in securing a fellow-being from suffocation; but that with us, where it was no more possible for one to deprive himself of his share of the common food, shelter, and clothing, than of the air he breathed, one could devote one's self utterly to others, without that fatal alloy of fear, which I thought must heavily qualify every good deed in plutocratic conditions.

She said that she knew what I meant, and that I was quite right in my conjecture, as regarded men, at least; a man who did not stop to think what the effect, upon himself and his own, his giving must have, would be a fool or a mad-

man; but women could often give as recklessly as they spent, without any thought of consequences, for they did not know how money came.

"Women," I said, "are exterior to your conditions, and they can sacrifice themselves without wronging any one."

"Oh, rather," she continued, "without the sense of wronging any one. Our men like to keep us in that senseless, or ignorant; they think it is pretty, or they think it is funny; and as long as a girl is in her father's house, or a wife is in her husband's, she knows no more of money-making or money-making, than a child. Most grown women, among us, if they had a sum of money in the bank, would not know how to get it out. They would not know how to endorse a check, much less draw one. But there are plenty of women who are inside the conditions, as much as men are: poor women who have to earn their bread, and rich women who have to manage their property. I can't speak for the poor women; but I can speak for the rich, and I can confirm for them that what you imagine is true. The taste of wealth and distrust is on every dollar that you take out, so that, as far as the charity of the rich is concerned, I would read Shakespeare."

"It costs him that gives and him that takes."

"Perhaps that is why the rich give comparatively so little! The poor can never understand how much the rich value their money, how much the owner of a great fortune dreads to see it lost! If it were not so they would surely give more than they do, for a man who has ten millions could give eight of them, without feeling the loss; the man with a hundred could give ninety, and be no poorer a man. Ah, it's a strange mystery! My poor husband and I used to talk of it a great deal, in the long year that he lay dying; and I think I have my superfluity the more because I know he hated it so much."

A little trouble had stolen into her impassioned tears, and there was a gleam as of tears, in the eyes she dropped for a moment. They were shining still, when she lifted them again to mine.

"I suppose," she said, "that Mrs. Makenzie told you something of my marriage?"

"Eveloth!" her mother protested, with a gentle manner.

"Oh, I think I can be frank with Mr. Benson! He is not an American, and he will understand, or, at least, he will not misunderstand. Besides, I dare say I shall not say anything worse than Mrs. Shively has said already." My husband was much older than I, and I ought not to have married him; a young girl ought never to marry an old man, or even a man who is only a good many years her senior. But we both faithfully tried to make the best of our mistake, not the worst, and I think this effort helped us to respect each other, when there couldn't be any question of more. He was a rich man, and he had made his money out of nothing, or, at least, from a beginning of utter poverty. But in his last years he came to a crisis of its worthlessness, such as few men who have made their money ever have. He was a common man, in a good many ways; he was imperfectly educated and he was ungratified, and he never was at home in society; but he had a tender heart, and an honest nature, and I reserve his memory, as no one would before I could without knowing him as I did. His money became a burden and a terror to him; he did not know what to do with it, and he was always nervously afraid of doing harm with it; he got to thinking that money was an evil in itself."

"That is what we think," I ventured.

"Yes, I know. But he had thought this out for himself, and yet he had times when his thinking about it seemed to him a kind of cross, and, at any rate, he distrusted himself so much that he died leaving it all to me. I suppose he thought that, perhaps, I could learn how to give it without having, and then he knew that, in our state of things, I must have some money to keep the wolf from the door. And I am afraid to part with it, too. I have given, and given; but there seems some evil spell on the principal, that guards it from encroachment, so that it remains the same, and, if I do not watch, the interest grows in the bank, with that frightful life dead money seems endowed with, as the hair of dead people grows on the grave."

"Eveloth!" her mother murmured again.

"Oh, yes," she answered, "I dare say my words are wild. I dare say they only mean that I hoard my luxury from the bottom of my soul, and long to be rid of it, if I only could, without harm to others, and with safety to myself."

It seemed to me that I became suddenly sensitive to this luxury for the first time. I had certainly been aware that I was in a large and stately house, and that I had been raised and brought up with a princely pride and profession. But there had, somehow, been through all, a sort of simplicity, a sort of reticent quiet, so that I had not thought of the establishment, and its operation, even so much as I had thought of Mrs. Shively's far inferior mode of living; or, else, what with my going about so much in society, I was coming to be so keenly observant of the material facts as I had been at first. But I was better qualified to judge of what I saw, and I had now a vivid sense of the costliness of Mrs. Strange's environment. There were thousands of dollars in the carpets, underfoot; there were tens of thousands in the pictures on the walls. In a bronze group that withdrew itself into a certain niche, with a faint recessure, there was the value of a skilled artisan's wage for five years of hard work; in the bindings of the books that shrouded from the library shelves, there was almost as much money as most of the authors had got for writing them. Every fixture, every movable, was an artistic masterpiece; a fortune, as fortunes used to be counted even in this land of affluence, had been lavished in the mere furnishing of a house which the palaces of nobles and princes of other times had contributed to embellish.

"My husband," Mrs. Strange went on, "bought this house for me, and let me furnish it after my own fancy. After it was all done, we neither of us liked it, and when he died, I felt as if he had left me in a tomb here."

"Eveloth," said her mother, "you ought not to speak so before Mr. Benson. He will not know what to think of you, and he will go back to Alabama with a very wrong idea of American women."

At this protest Mrs. Strange seemed to recover herself a little. "Yes," she said, "you must excuse me. I have no right to speak so. But one is often much franker with foreigners than with one's

own kind, and, besides, there is something—I don't know what—that will not let me keep the truth from you."

She gazed at me curiously, and then, as if some strong emotion swept her from her own hold, she broke out:

"He thought he would make some sort of atonement to me, as if I owed money to him! His money was all he had to do it with, and he spent that upon me in every way he could think of, though he knew that money could not buy anything that was really good, and that, if it bought anything beautiful, it spoiled it with the sense of cost, to every one who could value it in dollars and cents. He was a good man, far better than people ever imagined, and very simple-hearted and honest, like a child, in his contrition for his wealth, which he did not dare to get rid of; and though I know that, if he were to come back, it would be just as it was, his memory is as dear to me as if—"

She stopped, and pressed to her lip with her tooth, to stay its tremor. I was painfully affected. I knew that she had never meant to be so open with me, and was shocked and frightened at herself. I was sorry for her, and yet I was glad, for it seemed to me that she had given me a glimpse, not only of the truth in her own heart, but of the truth in the hearts of a whole order of prosperous people in these lamentable conditions, whom I shall hereafter be able to judge more leniently, more justly.

I began to speak of Altruria, as if that were what our talk had been leading up to, and she showed herself most intelligently interested concerning us, than any one I have yet seen in this country. We appeared, I found, neither incredible nor preposterous to her; our life, in her eyes, had that beauty of right living which the Americans so richly imagine, or imagine out of all. She asked what route I had come by to Anaxima, and she seemed disappointed and aggrieved that we placed the restrictions we have felt necessary upon visitors from the plutocratic world. When we asked, she asked, that they would corrupt our climate, or mar our content with

our institutions? She seemed scarcely satisfied when I explained, as I have explained no other here, that the measures we had taken were taken rather in the interest of the plutocratic world, than of the Altruists, and alleged the fact that no visitor from the outside had ever been willing to go home again, as sufficient proof that we had nothing to fear from the spread of plutocratic ideas among us. I assured her, and this she easily imagined, that the better known those became, the worse they appeared to us, and that the only concern our Friends felt, in regard to them, was that our youth could not conceive of them in all their enormity, but, in meeting plutocratic people, and seeing how miserable they often were, they would attribute to their conditions the inherent good of human nature. I said that our own life was so logical, so directly reasoned from its economic and political premises, that they could hardly believe the plutocratic life was often an absolute new square of the plutocratic premises. I confessed that this error was at the bottom of my own wish to visit Anaxima, and study those premises for myself.

"And what has your conclusion been?" she said, leaning eagerly toward me, across the table between us, laden with the maps and charts we had been examining for the verification of the position of Altruria, and my own course here, by way of England.

I heard a slight sigh escape Mrs. Gray, which I interpreted as an expression of the fatigue she might well feel, for it was already past twelve o'clock; and I made it the pretext for an instant escape.

"You have seen the meaning and purport of Altruria scarcely," I said, "what I think I can safely leave you to guess the answer to that question."

She laughed, and did not try to detain me, now, when I offered my hand for good-night. I fancied her mother took leave of me coldly, and with a certain effect of insinuation.

A. HICOTT



LETTERS OF AN ALTRURIAN TRAVELLER.

BY W. D. HOWLAND.

A PHOTOGRAPH TRIUMPH.

XL.

New York, April 20, 1894.

My dear Cyril:

It is long since I wrote you, and you have had reason enough to be impatient of my silence. I asked to the reproaches of your letter, with a due sense of my blame, whether I am altogether to-blame, you shall say after you have read this.

I cannot yet decide whether I have lost a great happiness, the greatest that could come to any man, or escaped the worst misfortune that could befall me. But such as it is, I will try to set the fact honestly down.

I do not know whether you had any conjecture, from my repeated mention of a lady whose character greatly interested me, that I was in the way of feeling any other interest in her than my letters expressed. I am no longer young, though at thirty-five an Altrurian is by no means so old as an American at the same age. The romantic ideas of the American women which I had formed from the American novels had been disappointed; if I had any sentiment toward them, as a type, it was one of distrust, which my very sense of the charms in their incoherence, their beauty, their brilliancy, served rather to intensify. I thought myself doubly defended by that difference between their civilization and ours, which forbade any reasonable hope of happiness in a sentiment for them, tenderer than that of the student of new and strange efforts in human nature. But we have not yet, my dear Cyril, removed the passion, even in Altruria.

After I last wrote you, a series of accidents, or what appeared so, threw me more and more constantly into the society of Mrs. Strange. We began to laugh at the fatality with which we met everywhere, at teas, at lunches, at dinners, at evening receptions, and even at balls, where I have been a great deal, because, with all my thirty-five years, I have not yet outlived that fondness for dancing which has so often amused you in

me. Whenever my acquaintances widened among cultivated people, then, had no exception but to ask us to meet each other, as if there were really no other woman in New York who could be expected to understand me. "You must come to lunch (or tea, or dinner, whichever it might be), and we will have her. She will be so much interested to meet you."

But perhaps we should have needed none of these accidents to bring us together. I, at least, can look back, and see that, when more of them happened, I sought occasions for seeing her, and made excuses of our common interest in this matter and in that, to go to her. As for her, I can only say that I seldom failed to find her at home, whether I called upon her nominal day or not, and more than once the man who let me in said he had been charged by Mrs. Strange to say that, if I called, she was to be back very soon, or, else, he made free to suggest that, though Mrs. Strange was not at home, Mrs. Gray was; and then I found it easy to stay until Mrs. Strange returned. The good old lady had an insatiable curiosity about Altruria, and though I don't think she ever quite believed in our reality, she at least always treated me kindly, as if I were the victim of an illusion that was thoroughly benign.

I think she had some notion that your letters, which I used often to take with me, and read to Mrs. Strange and herself, were inventions of mine; and the fact that they bore only an English postmark, confirmed her in this notion, though I explained that in our present passive attitude toward the world outside, we had yet no postal relations with other countries, and, as all our communication at home was by electricity, that we had no letter post of our own. The very fact that she belonged to a purer and better age in America disqualified her to conceive of Altruria; her daughter, who had lived into a full recognition of the terrible anarchy in which the conditions have ultimately bent, could far more vitally imagine us, and to her, I believe, we were at once

a living reality. Her perception, her sympathy, her intelligence, became more and more to me, and I escaped to them offense and offense, from a world where any Altirra must be so painfully at odds. In all companies here, I am aware that I have been regarded either as a good joke, or a bad joke, according to the humor of the listener, and it was grateful to be taken seriously.

From the first, I was sensible of a chasm in her, different from that I felt in other American women, and impossible in our Altirra women. She had a deep and almost tragical seriousness, masked with a most winning gaiety, a light irony, a fine sense that was rather her bariet than her others. She had thought herself out of all sympathy with her environment; she knew its falsehood, its vacuity, its hopelessness; but she necessarily remained in it, and of it. She was as much at odds in it as I was, without my poor privilege of criticism and protest. For, as she said, she could not set herself up as enemy of things that she must keep on doing as other people did. She could have renounced the world, as there are ways and means of doing, here; but she had no vocation to the religious life, and she could not deny it, without a sense of sacrilege. In fact, this generous, and magnanimous, and gifted woman was without that faith, that trust in God, which comes to us from loving His law, and which I wonder any American can keep. She denied nothing; but she had lost the strength to affirm anything. She no longer tried to do good from her heart, though she kept on doing charity in what she said was a mere mechanical impulse from the belief of other days, but always with the ironical doubt that she was doing harm. Where was nothing by halves, as men can be, and she was in a despair which no man can realize, for we have always some if or and, which a woman of the like moral costs from her in wild rejection. Where she could not clearly see her way to a true life, it was the same to her as an impenetrable darkness.

You will have inferred something of all this, from what I have written of her before, and from words of hers that I have reported to you. Do you think it so wonderful, then, that in the joy I felt at the hope, the solace which my story of our

life seemed to give her, she should become more and more precious to me? It was not wonderful, either, I think, that she should identify me with that hope, that solace, and should suffer herself to lean upon me, in a reliance infinitely sweet and endearing. But what a fantastic dream it now appears!

I can hardly tell you just how we came to own our love to each other; but one day I found myself alone with her mother, with the sense that Elveth had suddenly withdrawn from the room, at the knowledge of my approach. Mrs. Gray was strongly moved by something; but she governed herself, and, after giving me a tremulous hand, bade me sit.

"Will you excuse me, Mrs. Horne," she began, "if I ask you whether you intend to make America your home, after this?"

"Oh, no!" I answered, and I tried to keep out of my voice the despair with which the notion filled me. I have sometimes had nightmares, here, in which I thought that I was an American by choice, and I can give you no conception of the rapture of awakening to the fact that I could still go back to Altirra, that I had not cast my lot with this wretched people. "How could I do that?" I faltered, and I was glad to perceive that I had impacted to her as first of the misery which I had felt at such a notion.

"I mean, by getting naturalized, and becoming a citizen, and taking up your residence amongst us."

"No," I answered, as quietly as I could, "I had not thought of that."

"And you still intend to go back to Altirra?"

"I hope so; I ought to have gone back long ago, and if I had not met the friends I have in this home—" I stopped, for I did not know how I should end what I had begun to say.

"I am glad you think we are your friends," said the lady, "for we have tried to show ourselves your friends. I feel as if this had given me the right to say something to you, that you may think very odd."

"Say anything to me, dear lady," I returned. "I shall not think it unkind, no matter how odd it is."

"Oh, it's nothing. It's merely that— that when you are not here with us, I lose

my group on *Altavris*; and—and I begin to doubt—"

"I smiled. "I know! People here take often hunted something of that kind to me. Tell me, Mrs. Gray, do Americans generally take me for an impostor?"

"Oh, no!" she answered, fervently. "Everybody that I have heard speak of you has the highest regard for you, and believes you perfectly sincere. But—"

"But what?" I entreated.

"They think you may be mistaken."

"Then they think I am out of my wits—that I am in an hallucination!"

"No, not that," she returned. "But it is so very difficult for us to conceive of a whole nation living, as you say you do, on the same terms as our family, and no one trying to get ahead of another, or richer, and having neither inferior nor superior, but just one dead level of equality, where there is no distinction, except by natural gifts, and good deeds, or beautiful works. It seems impossible. It seems ridiculous."

"Yes," I confessed. "I know that it seems so to the Americans."

"And I want tell you something else, Mr. Haines, and I hope you won't take it amiss. The first night when you talked about *Altavris*, here, and showed us how you had come, by way of England, and the place where *Altavris* ought to be on our maps, I looked them over, after you were gone, and I could make nothing of it. As far as I could see, Australia and New Zealand occupied the place that *Altavris* ought to have had on the map."

"Australia and New Zealand are more like *Altavris* than any other countries of the plutocratic world, in their constitution," I said. "and perhaps that was what made them seem to occupy our place."

"No it wasn't that; it couldn't have been, for I didn't know that they were like *Altavris*. I can't explain it—I never could. I have often looked at the map since, but it was no use."

"Why," I said, "if you will let me have your atlas—"

She shook her head. "It would be the same again, as soon as you went away. I could not conceal my distress, and she went on: "Now, you mustn't mind what I say. I'm nothing but a silly old woman, and Evelyns would never forgive me if she could know what I've been saying."

"Then Mrs. Strange isn't troubled, as you are, concerning me?" I asked, and I noticed my anxiety attenuated my voice almost to a whisper.

Mrs. Gray shook her head vaguely. "She won't admit that she is. It might be better for her if she would. But Evelyns is very true to her friends, and that—that makes me all the more anxious that she should not deceive herself."

"Oh, Mrs. Gray!" I could not keep a certain tone of reproach out of my words.

She began to weep. "There! I know, I should hurt your feelings. But you mustn't mind what I say. I beg your pardon! I take it all back—"

"Ah, I don't want you to take it back! But what proof shall I give you that there is such a land as *Altavris*? If the darkness implies the day, America must imply *Altavris*. In what was do I seem false, or mad, except that I claim to be the citizen of a country where people love one another as the first Christians did?"

"That is just it," she returned. "No body can imagine the first Christians, and so you think we can imagine anything like them in our own day."

"But Mrs. Strange—she imagines us, you say?"

"She thinks so; but I am afraid she only thinks so, and I know her better than you do, Mr. Haines. I know how enthusiastic she always was, and how unhappy she has been since she has lost her hold on faith, and how eagerly she has caught at the hope you have given her of a higher life on earth than we live here. If she should ever find out that she was wrong I don't know what would become of her. You mustn't mind me; you mustn't let me wound you by what I say."

"You don't wound me, and I only thank you for what you say; but I entrust you to believe in me. Mrs. Strange has not deceived herself, and I have not deceived her. Shall I protest to you, by all that is sacred, that I am really what I told you I was, that I am not less, and that *Altavris* is infinitely more, happier, better, gladder, than any words of mine can say? Shall I not have the happiness to see your daughter to day? I had something to say to her, something—and now I have so much more! If she is in the house, will not you send to her? I can make her understand—"

I stopped at a certain expression which I feared I saw in Mrs. Gray's face.

"Mr. Benson," she began, so very seriously that my heart trembled with a vague misgiving. "sometimes I think you had better not see my daughter any more."

"Not see her any more?" I gasped.

"Yes. I don't see what good can come of it, and it's all very strange, and unnecessary. I don't know how to explain it; but, indeed, it isn't anything personal. It's because you are of a state of things so utterly opposed to human nature, that I don't see how—I am afraid that—"

"But I am not necessary to her?" I interjected. "I am not unusual, not incredible—"

"Oh, no; that is the worst of it. But I have said too much; I have said a great deal more than I ought. But you must excuse it. I am an old woman. I am not very well, and I suppose it's that makes me talk so much."

She rose from her chair, and I perforce rose from mine, and made a movement toward her.

"No, no," she said. "I don't need any help. You must come again soon, and see us, and show that you've forgotten what I've said." She gave me her hand, and I could not help handing over it, and kissing it. She gave a little, pectoral whinger. "Oh, I *dear* I've said the most dreadful things to you."

"You haven't said anything that takes your friendship from me, Mrs. Gray, and that is what I care for." My own eyes filled with tears. I do not know why, and I groped my way from the room. Without seeing any one in the obscurity of the hallway, where I found myself, I was aware of some one there, by that sort of fine perception that makes us know the presence of a spirit.

"You are going?" a whisper said.

"Why are you going?" And Evelyn had me by the hand, and was drawing me gently into the dim drawing-room that opened from the place. "I don't know all my mother has been saying to you. I had to let her say something; she thought she ought. I knew you would know how to excuse it."

"Oh, my dearest!" I said, and why I said this I do not know, or how we found ourselves in each other's arms.

"What are we doing?" she murmured.

"You don't believe I am an impostor, an illusion, a visionary?" I brought her, straining her closer to my heart.

"I believe in you, with all my soul!" she answered.

We sat down, side by side, and talked long. I did not go away the whole day. With a high disdain of convention, she made me stay. Her mother sent word that she would not be able to come to dinner, and we were alone together at table, in an image of what our united lives should be. We spent the evening in that happy interchange of trivial confidences that lovers use in instead of the masterful raptures that fill them. We were there in what seemed an infinite present, without a past, without a future.

Society had to be taken into our confidence, and Mrs. Blakeley saw to it that there were no reserves with society. Our engagement was not quite like that of two young persons, but people found in our character and circumstance an interest far transcending that felt in the engagement of the most romantic lovers. Some note of the fact came to us by accident, one evening when we stood near a couple, and heard them talking. "It must be very weird," the man said; "something like being engaged to a materialization."

"Yes," said the girl. "quite the Dream-Lover business, I should think." She glanced round, as people do, in talking, and, at sight of us, she involuntarily put her hand over her mouth. I looked at Evelyn; there was nothing expressed in her face but a generous anxiety for me. But so far as the open attitude of society toward us was concerned, nothing could have been more flattering. We could hardly have been more asked to meet each other than before; but now there were entertainments in special recognition of our betrothal, which Evelyn said could not be altogether refused, though she found the ordeal as odious as I did. In America, however, you get used to many things. I do not know why it should have been done, but in the society columns of several of the great newspapers, our likenesses were printed, from photographs procured I cannot guess how, with descriptions of our persons as to those points of coloring, and carriage, and stature, which the pictures could not

give, and with biographies such as could be ascertained in her case and imagined in mine. In some of the society papers, paragraphs of a surprising severity appeared, attacking me as an impostor, and aspersing the motives of Eveleth in her former marriage, and treating her as a foolish crank, or an insidious flirt. The goodness of her life, her self-sacrifice and works of benevolence counted for no more against these wicked attacks than the absolute noninvolvement of my own; the writers knew no harm of her, and they knew nothing at all of me; but they devoted us to the execration of their readers simply because we turned up and ready targets for paragraphs. You may judge of how wild they were in their aim when some of them denounced me as an Altirran platonist!

We could not escape this storm of notoriety; we had simply to let it spend its fury. When it began, several reporters of both sexes came to interview me, and questioned me, not only as to all the facts of my past life, and all my purposes in the future, but as to my opinions of hypnosis, eternal punishment, the Hosen drama, and the tariff reform. I did my best to answer them seriously, and certainly I answered them civilly, but it seemed from what they printed that the answers I gave did not concern them, for they gave others for me. They appeared to me for the most part kindly and well-meaning young people, though vastly ignorant of vital things. They had apparently valued me with much made up, or else their reports were revised by some controlling hand, and a quality injected more in the tone of the special journals they represented, than as keeping with the facts. When I realized this, I refused to see any more reporters, or to answer them, and then they printed the questions they had prepared to ask me, in such form that my silence was made of the same damaging effect as a full confession of guilt upon the charges.

The experience was so strange and new to me that it affected me in a degree I was unwilling to let Eveleth imagine. But she divined my distress, and when she decided that it was chiefly for her, she set herself to console and reassure me. She told me that this was something every one here expected, in coming willingly or

unwillingly before the public; and that I must not think of it at all, for certainly no one else would think twice of it. Thus, I found was really so, for when I ventured tentatively to refer to some of these publications, I found that people, if they had read them, had altogether forgotten them; and that they were, with all the glare of print, of far less effect with our acquaintances, than something read under the breath in a corner. I found that some of our friends had not known the effigy for whom which they had seen in the papers; others made a joke of the whole affair, as the Americans do with so many affairs, and said that they supposed the portraits were those of people who had been cured by some patent medicine; they looked so strong and handsome. Then, I think, was a piece of Mr. Melody's humor in the beginning; but it had a general vogue long after the interviews and the illustrations were forgotten.

I linger a little upon these trivial matters because I shrink from what must follow. They were scarcely blots upon our happiness; rather they were notes in the sunshine which had no other cloud. It is true that I was always somewhat puzzled by a certain manner in Mrs. Gray, which certainly was from no unfairness to me; she could not have been more affectionate to me, after our engagement, if I had been really her own son; and it was not until after our common kindness had confirmed itself upon the new footing that I felt this perplexing qualification on it. I felt it first one day when I found her alone, and I talked long and freely to her of Eveleth, and spoke to her my whole heart of joy in our love. At one point she casually asked me how soon we should expect to return from Altirra after our visit; and at first I did not understand.

"Of course," she explained, "you will want to see all your old friends, and we will Eveleth, for they will be her friends, too; but if you want me to go with you, as you say, you must let me know when I shall see New York again."

"Why?" I said, "you will always be with us!"

"Well, then," she pursued with a smile, "when shall you come back?"

"Oh, never!" I answered. "No one ever leaves Altirra, if he can help it, unless he is sent on a mission."

"She looked a little mystified, and I went on:—"Of course, I was not officially authorized to visit the world outside, but I was permitted to do so, to satisfy a curiosity the Priors thought useful; but I have now had quite enough of it, and I shall never leave home again."

"You won't come to live in America?"

"God forbid!" said I, and I am afraid I could not hide the horror that ran through me at the thought. "And when you were not our happy country, you could no more be persuaded to return to America than a disembodied spirit could be persuaded to return to the earth."

She was silent, and I asked:—"But, surely, you understood that, Mrs. Gray?"

"No," she said, reluctantly. "Does Eveleth?"

"Why, certainly!" I said. "We have talked it over a hundred times. Haven't we?"

"I don't know," she returned, with a vague trouble in her voice and eyes. "Perhaps I haven't understood her exactly. Perhaps—but I shall be ready to do whatever you and she think best. I am an old woman, you know; and you know, I was born here, and I should feel the change."

Her words conveyed to me a delicate reproach; I felt for the first time that, in my love of my own country, I had not considered her love of hers. It is said that the homelands are homelands when they leave their world of lava and snow, and I ought to have remembered that an American might have some such tenderness for his strenuous conditions, if he were exiled from them forever. I suppose it was the large and wide mind of Eveleth, with its openness to knowledge and appreciation of better things, that had suffered me to forget this. She seemed always so eager to see Altruism, she imagined it so fully, so lovingly, that I had ceased to think of her as an alien; she seemed one of us, by birth as well as by affinity.

Yes, now, the words of her mother, and the light they threw upon the situation, gave me pause. I began to ask myself questions which I was impatient to ask Eveleth, so that there should be no longer any shadow of mystery in my heart; and yet I feared myself daring to ask them, lest by some perverse juggle I had

mistaken our perfect sympathy in all things for a perfect understanding.

Like all cowards who wait a happy moment for the duty that should not be suffered to wait at all, I was destined to have the after challenge me, instead of seeing the advantage of it that instant frankness would have given me. Shall I confess that I let several days go by, and still had not spoken to Eveleth, when, at the end of a long evening—the last long evening we passed together—she said:

"What would you like to have me do with this house while we are gone?"

"Do with this house?" I echoed, and I felt as if I were standing on the edge of an abyss.

"Yes; shall we let it, or sell it; or what? Or give it away?" I drew a little breath at this; perhaps we had not misunderstood each other, after all. She went on:—"Of course, I have a peculiar feeling about it, so that I wouldn't like to get it ready, and let it furnished, in the ordinary way. I would rather lend it to some one, if I could be sure of any one who would appreciate it; but I can't. Not one! And it's very much the same when one comes to think about selling it. Yes, I should like to give it away for some good purpose, if there is any in this wretched state of things! What do you say, Aristotle?"

She always used the French name of my name, because she said it sounded ridiculous in English, for a white man, though I told her that the English was nearer the Greek in sound.

"By all means, give it away," I said. "Give it to some public purpose. That will at least be better than any private purpose, and put it somehow in the control of the State, beyond the reach of individuals or corporations. Why not make it the foundation of a free school for the study of the Altruistic polity and economy?"

She laughed at this, as if she thought I must be joking.—"It would be dull, wouldn't it, to have Tammany appointees teaching Altruism?" Then she said, after a moment of reflection:—"Why not? It needn't be in the hands of Tammany. It could be in the hands of the United States; I will ask my lawyer if it couldn't, and I will endow it with money enough

to support the school handsomely. Aristide, you have let it!"

I began: "You can give all your money to it, my dear—" But I stopped at the bewildered look she turned on me.

"All?" she repeated. "But what should we have to live on, then?"

"We shall need no money to live on, in Alturia," I answered.

"Oh, in Alturia! But when we come back to New York?"

It was an appalling moment, and I felt that shelling of the heart which blinds the eyes and numbs the brain.

"Evelith!" I gasped, "did you expect to return to New York?"

"Why, certainly!" she cried. "Not at once, of course. But after you had seen all your friends, and made a good, long visit— Why surely, Aristide, you don't understand that I— You didn't mean to live in Alturia?"

"Ah!" I answered. "Where else could I live? Did you think for an instant that I could live in such a land as this?" I saw that she was hurt, and I hastened to say, "I know that it is the best part of the world outside of Alturia; but, oh, my dear, you cannot imagine how horrible the notion of living here seems to me. Forget me! I am going from bad to worse. I don't mean to wound you. After all, it is your country, and you must love it. But, indeed, I could not think of living here. I could not take the burden of its wifal, hopeless misery on my soul. I must live in Alturia, and you, when you have once seen my country, our country, will never consent to live in any other!"

"Yes," she said, "I knew it must be very beautiful, but I hadn't supposed—and yet I ought—"

"No, dearest, no! It was I who was to blame, for not being clearer from the first. But that is the way with us. We can't imagine any people willing to live anywhere else when once they have seen Alturia, and I have told you so much of it, and we have talked of it together so often, that I must have forgotten you had not actually known it. But listen, Evelith! We will agree to this. After we have been a year in Alturia, if you wish to return to America, I will come back and live with you here."

"No, indeed!" she answered, gently.

"If you are to be my husband," and here she began with the solemn words of the Bible, so beautiful in their quaint English, "whether thou goest, I will go, and I will not return from following after thee. Thy country shall be my country, and thy God my God!"

I caught her to my breast, in a rapture of tenderness, and the evening that had begun for us so startlingly, ended in a happiness such as not even our love had known before. I insisted upon the conditions I had made, as to our future home, and she agreed to them gaily, at last, as a sort of reparation which I might make my conscience, if I liked, for tearing her from a country which she had willingly lived out of for the far greater part of the last five years.

But when we met again, I could see that she had been thinking seriously.

"I won't give the house absolutely away," she said. "I will keep the deed of it myself, but I will establish that sort of school of Alturian doctrine in it, and I will endow it, and when we come back here, for our experimental season, after we've been in Alturia a year, will take up our quarters in it.—I won't give the whole house to the school,—and we will lecture on the later phases of Alturian life to the people. How will that do?"

She put her arms round my neck, and I said that it would do admirably, but I had a certain sinking of the heart for I saw how hard it was even for Evelith to part with her property.

"I'll endow it," she went on, "and I'll leave the rest of my money at interest here, unless you think that some Alturian securities—"

"No, there are no such things!" I cried.

"That was what I thought," she returned; "and as it will cost us nothing while we are in Alturia, the interest will be something very handsome by the time we get back, even in United States bonds."

"Something handsome!" I cried. "But, Evelith, haven't I heard you say yourself that the growth of interest from dead money was like—"

"Oh, yes, that!" she returned. "But you know you have to take it. You can't let the money lie idle, that would be ridiculous; and then, with the good purpose we have in view, it is our duty to

take the interest. How should we keep up the school, and pay the teachers, and everything?"

I saw that she had forgotten the great name of the principal, or that, through life-long training and association, it was so sacred to her that she did not even dream of teaching it. I was silent, and she thought that I was persuaded.

"You are perfectly right in theory, dear, and I feel just as you do about such things; I'm sure I've suffered enough from them; but if we didn't take interest for your money, what should we have to live on?"

"Not my money, Evelyn!" I protested.

"Don't say my money!"

"But whatever is mine is yours," she returned, with a wounded air.

"Not your money; but I hope you will soon have none. We should need no money to live on in Altruia. Our share of the daily toil of all will amply suffice for our daily bread and shelter."

"In Altruia, yes. But how about America? And you have promised to come back here to a year, you know. Ladies and gentlemen can't share in the daily toil, here, even if they could get the toil, and where there are so many out of work, it isn't probable they could."

She dropped upon my knee, as she spoke, laughing, and put her hand under my chin, to lift my fallen face.

"Now, you mustn't be a goose, Aristotle, even if you are an angel." Now, listen! You know, don't you, that I hate money just as badly as you?"

"You have made me think so, Evelyn," I answered.

"I hate it and loathe it. I think it's the source of all the sin and misery in the world; but you can't get rid of it at a blow. For if you gave it away, you might do more harm than good with it."

"You could destroy it," I said.

"Not unless you were a crank," she returned. "And that brings me just to the point. I know that I'm doing a very queer thing to get married, when we know so little, really, about you," and she accentuated this confession with a laugh that was also a hiss. "But I want to show people that we are just as practical as anybody; and if they can know that I have lent my money all in United States bonds, they'll respect us, no matter what

I do with the interest. Don't you see? We can come back, and preach and teach Altruism, and as long as we pay our way, nobody will have the right to say a word. Why, Talbot himself doesn't destroy his money, though he wants other people to do it. His wife keeps it, and supports the family. You dare to do it."

"He doesn't do it willingly."

"No. And he won't. And after a while—after we've got back, and compared Altruia and America from practical experience, if we decide to go to live there altogether, I will let you do what you please with the hateful money. I suppose we couldn't take it there with us."

"No more than you could take it to heaven with you," I answered solemnly; but she would not let me be altogether serious about it.

"Well, in either case, we could get on without it, though we certainly could not get on without it, here. Why, Aristotle, it is essential to the influence we shall try to exert for Altruism, for if we came back here, and preached the true life without any money to back us, no one would pay any attention to us. But if we have a good house waiting for us, and are able to entertain nicely, we can attract the best people, and—and—really do some good."

I rose in a distress which I could not hide. "Oh, Evelyn, Evelyn!" I cried.

"You are like all the rest, poor child. You are the creature of your environment, as we all are. You cannot escape what you have been. It may be that I was wrong to wish or expect you to cast your lot with me in Altruia, at once and forever. It may be that it is my duty to return here with you after a time, not only to let you see that Altruia is best, but to end my days in this unhappy land preaching and teaching Altruism; but we must not come as prophets to the comfortable people, and extortioners, if we are to renew the evangel. It must be in the life and the spirit of the First Altruist; we must come poor to the poor; we must not try to win any one, save through his heart and his conscience; we must be simple and humble as the least of those that Christ had to follow Him. Evelyn, perhaps you have made a mistake! I love you too much to wish

you to suffer even for your good. Yes, I am so weak, so that! I did not think that this would be the sacrifice for just that it means, and I will not ask it of you. I am sorry that we have not understood each other, as I supposed we had. I could never become an American; perhaps you could never become an Altruman. Think of it, dearest! Think well of it, before you take the step which you cannot recede from. I hold you to no promise; I love you so dearly that I cannot let you hold yourself. But you must choose between me and your money—no, not me!—but between love and your money. You cannot keep both."

She had stood listening to me; now she cast herself on my heart, and stopped my words with an impassioned kiss. "Then there is no choice for me. My choice is made, once for all!" She set her hands against my breast, and pushed me from her. — Go, now! But come again to-morrow. I want to think it all over again. Not that I have any doubt; but because you wish it—you wish it, don't you?—and because I will not let you ever think I acted upon an impulse, and that I regretted it."

"That is right, Evelyn! That is like you," I said, and I took her rainy arms for good-night.

The next day, I came for her decision, or rather for her confirmation of it. The man who opened the door to me, met me with a look of concern and embarrassment. He said Mrs. Strange was not at all well, and had said he was to give me the letter he handed me. I asked, in taking it, if I could see Mrs. Gray, and he answered that Mrs. Gray had not been down yet, either, but he would go and see. I was impatient to read my letter, and I made I know not what vague reply, and I found myself, I know not how, on the pavement, with the letter open in my hand. It began abruptly without date or address:

"You will believe that I have not slept, when you read this.

"I have thought it all over again, as you wished, and it is all over between us.

"I am what you said, the creature of my environment. I cannot detach my-

self from it; I cannot escape from what I have been.

"I am writing this with a strange coldness, like the chill of death to my very soul. I do not ask you to forgive me; I have your forgiveness already. Do not forget me; that is what I ask. Remember me to the unhappy woman who was not equal to her chance when heaven was opened to her—who could not choose the best, when the best came to her.

"There is no use writing, if I kept on forever, it would always be the same cry of shame, of love.

"EVELYN STRANGE."

I read so I read the lines. The street seemed to weave itself into a circle around me. But I knew that I was not dreaming, that this was no delusion of my sleep.

It was three days ago, and I have not tried to see her again. I have written her a line, to say that I shall not forget her, and to take the blame upon myself. After all, I expected the impossible of her.

I have yet two days before me until the steamer sails; we were to have sailed together, and now I shall sail alone.

I will try to leave it all behind me forever; but while I linger out these last long hours here, I must think, and I must doubt.

Was she, then, the possesser that they said? Had she really no heart in our love? Was it only a pretty drama she was playing, and were those generous motives, those lofty principles which seemed to actuate her, the postural qualities of the play, the graces of her pose? I cannot believe it. I believe that she was truly what she seemed, for she had been that even before she met me. I believe that she was pure and lofty in soul as she appeared; but that her life was warped to such a form by the false conditions of this sad world, that, when she came to look at herself again, after she had been confronted with the sacrifice before her, she feared that she could not make it without in a manner ceasing to be.

She—

But I shall not see you again; and until then, farewell.

A. HOWARD